

# CLASS OF 1966

50TH REUNION



BENNINGTON COLLEGE



## Class of 1966

Paul Fink Aaron

Anne Longstreth Anderson

Barbara Anixter \*

Lauren Doolittle Ansaldo

Jeanette Ball

Louise Baum

Nan Beer

Janis Birkeland

Sara Spadea Black

Claire Howell Blatchford

Patricia Tate Boutilier

Nancy Barrows Bowen

Sally Bowie

Frances Boyer\*

Victoria Brahe-Wiley

Mary Baker Carrithers

Susan Carroll

Lisa Taylor Clark

Kathy Kondell Conrad

Colleen Copelan

Elaine Buxbaum Cousins

Valerie Crane

Cynthia Cole Curran

Elizabeth Cutler\*

Ellen Weintraub D'Acquisto

Anita Dancoff

Audrey Dawson

Beth Herzig Emerson

Roberta Ballin Fischer\*

Pamela Stowe Fisher

Debra Kram Fisher\*

Susanne Thomsen Fones

Danielle Schley Forestier

Lee Fowler\*

Clare Franco

Adrienne Franklin

Susan Frary

Johanna Freudenberg

Jane Fuller

Barbara Mathews Furstenberg

Barbara Reedman Gambier\*

Katherine Garnett

Heidi Gluck

Trudy Goodman

Constance Wallace Gordon\*

Katharine Gregg

Thomas Griffin

Diana Grilli

Anthony Gronner

Colette Whitney Gruenebaum

Sally Brenner Cooley Hammerman

Sophia Maue Hammond-Vachss\*

Lisa Lippold Hantman

Gay Harriman

Margaret Hauschka\*

Marian Johnson Henderson

Susan West Hirsh

Ruth Hornbein

Jean Humez

Livia Jackson

Susan Wyman Jannicky

Maryann Sanford Johnson

Margaret Kallman

Nancy Miller Katzoff

Nan Foster Kilbourn-Tara

Margaret Kinder

Sheridan King

Mica Knapp

Lise Koht

Olivia Koppell	Shelley Miller Pearlman	Beth Silverman
David Krohn	Charles Perniconi	Susan Slovak
Thea Comins Lahti	Roberta Levine Phillips	Susan Volwiler Smyth
Elin Fleischer Leonard	Judith Penelope Dunlop Ransmeier	Mariana Brinser Sonntag
Marion Liebes	Susanne Snyder Rappaport*	Joyce Spector
Nancy Lloyd	Shelly Abrahamson Richtmyer*	Allan Stevens
Susan Loesser	Jane Wood Robinson	Amy Stern Stoffelmayr
Eileen Thaler Lordahl	Martha Rockwell	Susan Stowens
Marilyn Lowen	Elizabeth Roeseler	Mary Beckerman Strouchler
Sheila Wheeler Lutton	Gilian Kneubuhl Roush	Shelagh Gordon Talbot
Anne MacNichol	Glynn Rudich	Ellen Taussig
Susan Thompson Massey*	Ellen Beskind Safir	Roberta Jossy Tichenor
Joan Anne Maxham	Dorette Kagin Sarachik	Sharon Spertl Turner
Carey Maynard	Deborah Pollack Schanzer	Heidi Jost Von Bergen
Karen McAuley	Valerie Henken Schmergel	Anne Waldman
Abigail Mellen	Marie Schomaker*	Novelene Yatsko Walters
Ruth Bauer Neustadter	David Schreiber	Jane Wechsler
Cynthia Leapley Nicely	Ruth Felsher Schreiber*	Ethel Jacoff Weinberger
Alice Helfferich Orsini	Susannah Schroll	Martha Goldstein White*
Nancy Osthues*	Elisabeth Searles	Ellen Wilbur
Megan Parry	Kathran Siegel	Judith Schwartz Yeargin*
Stefana Sirotof Paskoff	Loren Siegel	Elizabeth Bailey Richter Zimmer

With heartfelt thanks to Elizabeth Zimmer '66 for her editorial contribution to this volume.

\*Denotes deceased

## Claire Howell Blatchford

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How to squeeze 50 years into 500 words?

This is comparable to some of the challenges Stanley Rosen and Howard Nemerov tossed my way back then. Challenges I relished!

Stanley: "Throw ten ten-inch cylinders in half an hour...." When done, he'd slice them in half to check their thick or thinness.

Nemerov: (after months of stuffing my efforts weekly in his mailbox) "I'll just say you've come a way towards turning yourself into a poet."

Bennington meant new freedoms. I let my hair grow, lived in jeans, delighted in having easy access to various studios at all hours, cut classes whenever I needed to roam the back roads of Bennington, and reveled in not having to have weekly speech therapy.

I'd lost my hearing overnight shortly after turning six, didn't get a hearing aid till I was 12, yet was mainstreamed, as my parents thought I might become really deaf if I attended schools for the deaf. (Schools for the deaf were the way to go in those days.)



On the one hand, my life in the mainstream seemed to be an ongoing sink or swim situation. I missed vast amounts of conversation in classes and socially, and had to compensate in various ways. On the other hand, I tuned into a subtle realm I would most likely not have been aware of if I hadn't lost most of my hearing. It was evident we don't hear only through our physical ears. We hear through our eyes, feet, hands, skin, imaginations, hearts, intuition, and more. I believe *every* disability, or seeming misfortune, can, when one is attentive, open into opportunity. We are never alone.



Speaking metaphorically, the private school for girls I attended before Bennington gave me the needed gardening tools (study skills, grasp of English, etc.), and Bennington was the greenhouse in which I first explored their use and possibilities. It would be easy to write at length in appreciation of not only Rosen and Nemerov but also Pat Adams, Kit Foster, David Smith, Robert Woodward, Francis Golfing, colleagues Sophia Healy, Susie Stanton, and others, cheerful receptionists at the switch board, and Jock Wright, my

first boyfriend at Williams. All my NRT's were good, difficult, stretching experiences.

Now—briefly—to share the joys and challenges of my life since Bennington.

In the summer of 1966 I met Edward Blatchford: the kindest man I'd ever met and—deafness aside—the easiest to talk, laugh, and dream aloud with. We were married in 1968. Together, and separately, we've been much involved in education. Edward taught, headed three schools, and was the founder of a charter public school in western

Massachusetts. I worked with deaf children, most recently at the Clarke School in Northampton, MA. All the while I've been writing. I've had 22 books published: mostly on hearing, inner hearing, and deafness. If interested, look up "Steiner Books" or check *Coming to My Senses* about the cochlear implant I got four years ago. I owe much to three spiritual explorers: Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), John F. Gardner (1912–1998), and David Spangler of the Lorian Association.

The apples of our eyes—Ed's and mine—are our two wonderful daughters, and their families. Both are strong women, leaders in their field. Laurel (44) was Chief of Staff to Shawn Donovan when he headed HUD. She's now at Enterprise Community Partners (solutions in affordable housing). Christa (41) is COE of the Joan Mitchell Foundation. Both have dear husbands, both have two children.

Now—being over the word limit—I will say no more, just, "Thank you Bennington for your part in the many blessings in my life."



*Claire H. Blatchford with Howard Nemerov.*

## Sally Independence Bowie

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I came to Bennington because my favorite high school English teacher had taught there one summer and read to our class a short story by a Bennington student that knocked my socks off. My mother had wanted me to go to Vassar, where she had gone, but Bennington was more to my liking. Although, what did I know? I came to interview in the dead of winter when all the students were away on NRT placements. But I loved my conversation with the admissions director about novels we wished would never end.

Before Bennington, I attended a small, scruffy boarding school, one that my father, my older brother and later my sister all attended. My sister, 13 years younger, later went to Bennington as well. I assumed that Bennington, tiny as it was, would be as intimate, warm and welcoming as my high school. It was not. As a culture, it celebrated individuality and creativity – both wonderful aspirations – but not community. Too bad.

Because of Dr. Lawson's infamous Black Box, I began my Bennington life as a physics major. In my sophomore year, I switched to literature, finding more mystery there. I am especially grateful to Barbara Herrnstein Smith for her rigor and her passion.

My NRT's were spent at the National Geographic, Time/Life, Grove Press, and teaching AP English at my former high school. While on my first NRT, I heard about women co-workers arranging then-illegal abortions for friends. I carefully noted the secret contacts and brought them back to Bennington where I, in turn, helped some classmates obtain safe abortions. Later, reproductive rights would become my work.



*From left to right: Loren Siegel, Jean McMabon Humez, Elin Fleischer Leonard, Sally Bowie at my house in 2004*

After Bennington, I spent a year in the Bureau of Child Welfare in Manhattan, then went to Columbia for a Master's in English Literature. That was during the student riots. I was a strike representative for my graduate class. I also got married (eloped) to an artist. Although we divorced 3 years later, we remain close friends. He subsequently married a Bennington dancer, whom I adore.

I worked for Preterm, in Washington, D.C., one of the first free standing abortion clinics on the East Coast. I decided I





*From left to right: Randy, Jesse, Dolph, Sally*

needed more training in mental health so I got an MSW from Smith and moved to Boston to develop an improvisational theater troupe for Planned Parenthood, using adolescents to teach through drama. Then I ran a Rape Crisis Program at one of the major Boston teaching hospitals, got married again, this time to a psychiatrist/psychoanalyst from Utah. We had two sons when we were in our late thirties, early forties. When my boys were small, I left hospital work for private practice but also did volunteer work with AIDS patients. My own younger brother died of AIDS in 1995. For the past 14 years, I have been studying and teach-

ing about couples therapy, working with a lively, fun and funny group of colleagues. The work has been a joy and a challenge.

Our sons are launched, mostly. The younger one, Jesse, is a third year medical student, and the older one, Dolph, is an actor and a Speech Language Pathologist. Both have long term loves but no grandchildren yet in sight.

My husband, Randy Paulsen, and I still love our work, with no plans to retire. Maybe cutting back, more travel, more time to visit our kids. For the past 34 years, we have lived in intentional communities.

I am grateful that I continue to know and to love three dear friends from Bennington – Jean (McMahon) Humez, Loren Siegel and Elin (Fleischer) Leonard. We four will gather in Boston this fall to celebrate our 54 years of knowing each other. I have loved reading about my classmates and am grateful to those who wrote.

p.s. Connie Wallace Gordon died on July 20, 2001. I had the pleasure of reconnecting with her in the years prior to her death.

## **Elaine Buxbaum Cousins**

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It's hard to say if a self-starter "can-do" attitude was kindled at Bennington or if it is what led me there. In any case, I am thankful for this attitude for it has allowed me to enjoy the opportunities and challenges that have been part of my life since leaving Bennington. In 1965 I married, left Bennington, and transferred to the University of California, Berkeley, where my new husband was beginning graduate studies. Coincidentally, my good friend Betsy Bradford '67 was married on the same weekend and also transferred to UC Berkeley. I always describe my Berkeley experience as being like a kid in a candy store. There were so many wonderful courses to take and people studying things I didn't even know existed.

In addition to the beautiful Vermont campus setting, my favorite Bennington memories include playing the percussion instruments in Henry Brant's studio, the day I gained a totally new perspective on literature in Kit Foster's freshman English class, hearing my duets for two violins performed, and when I realized I could finally write a worthwhile paper in my junior year.

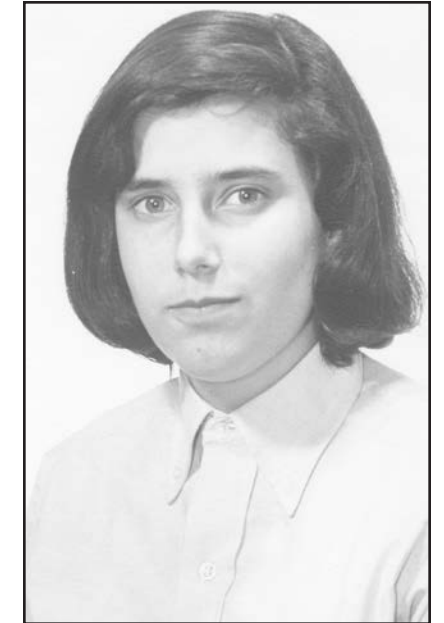
I graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in Anthropology and then received an MA in Music Theory/Literature from Eastern Michigan University. I wasn't lucky enough to find employment with my new music degree, but instead began working for the high school exchange student organization, Youth for Understanding (YFU) in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Washington, DC; and Hamburg, Germany. I treasure the time I spent in Germany and the friendships I made there—friendships that are as important to me now as they were when I lived in Germany.



*At a friend's farm in central Illinois.*

Sometimes just being in the right place at the right time can make all the difference. I returned to the USA in 1982 in the midst of challenging economic times, but landed an office job at the University of Michigan that would introduce me to the wonders of microcomputers. Like many others with liberal arts degrees in the mid-'80s, I suddenly found myself with a strong marketable skill. I retired from the University of Michigan in 2002 after a 20-year career advancing from secretary to information technology division user services manager and adjunct faculty in the College of Engineering.

While my marriage did not last, a wonderful product of the marriage is my delightful daughter, Monica. Monica is director of history education at Illinois State University and her husband, Kirk, enjoys a successful periodontal practice in





*At the symphony with Santa.*

Bloomington and Champaign, Illinois. In 2002, I moved to Bloomington to be closer to Monica and her family. Since retiring, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, bicycling, traveling, serving as president of our sister city association, serving on the boards of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra and the Illinois Symphony Orchestra Guild, and, until recently, serving a six-year term as a member of the volunteer council of the League of American Orchestras. Ever a student, I recently started taking violin lessons and tennis lessons. Life is good.

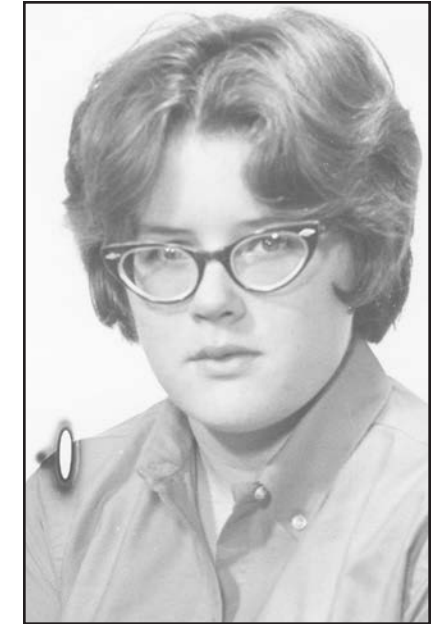
## Elizabeth Cutler

I dropped out of Bennington in November 1963, the same week President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Since then my life has been characterized by various kinds of employment, interests, and illness. I am writing this from a hospital bed in a long-term care facility in San Francisco, where I expect to spend the rest of my days. I am typing this hunt and peck with the index finger on my left hand since my right hand and arm are paralyzed. I have multiple sclerosis.

I arrived at Bennington having taken my first ride on an airplane. I was immediately taken aback since all the other students had been accompanied by family, who helped them unpack and settle into their rooms. I felt lonely and homesick from the start. I spent my days there discovering new things but feeling very much out of place most of the time.

One of the college administrators told me that I had the best writing sample of my class, but I was a great procrastinator and rarely was able to demonstrate that talent. It was only later, after I dropped out, that I discovered that my achievement in life was not to be academic but commercial, and I ended up having a 20-year career in advertising, copywriting, and enjoying the camaraderie of a small ad agency in New York City.

Then multiple sclerosis struck. Limping, I left the agency and the city and returned to California, where I had family. I got another job in San Francisco, but there was no Americans with Disabilities Act those days, and eventually I was jobless once again. I freelanced as long as I could. In 1989, the Loma Prieta earthquake struck. There was little damage in my apartment, and a neighbor told me she was volunteering at a nearby monastery. This inspired me to volunteer at a local food bank; a local news crew discovered me there, and I was featured on an evening broadcast. Volunteering had a spiritual aspect, and the one thing I regret now is being bed-bound and unable to be useful to others.



*Elizabeth Cutler passed away in May 2016.*



## Audrey Elizabeth Dawson

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I grew up with a love of dance, reading, theater, music, and art. So Bennington felt a good match. I drank up Stanley Edgar Hyman's Myth, Ritual, and Literature, conversations with Bernard Malamud and Saul Maloff, dance with Martha and Joe Wittman, Jack Moore and Bill Bales. Remembering more, I hid out in the library chewing Teaberry gum and savoring the scent of cherry tobacco from professors' pipes.

NYC called me back to complete college, working summers at *House & Garden* magazine. Arriving early to dream in their test kitchen and admire the hats of the editors, I started copywriting in "Shopping Around." My career wound through journalism, publishing, public relations, consulting. My focus was on authors, medical health, and pharma and gave me the chance to attend conferences around the country and in Europe.

Concurrently, in 1990, I returned to school to become a New York State licensed psychotherapist, of the energy-oriented, psychodynamic, experiential kind. My clients are a creative challenge and I use all my resources including yoga, body-mind work, and joy in moving.

My curiosity and love of learning continue. A decade ago, after years of wandering and serial monogamy, I reunited with my high school and college (first two years) sweetheart. Now we're partners and will wed. On the home front we're busy redesigning and renovating our 1927 vintage family Tudor. This is an unexpected dream come true and feels like coming full circle back home for the first time. Well worth the journey.

Our shared family and friends are our treasures. With five granddaughters, two grandnieces, two grandnephews, we feel blessed. For our grandnephew Otto, we recently entertained "Flat Stanley" with a photo shoot in NYC including the Flat Iron Building, Empire State Building, and Second Avenue Deli, before we returned him to Otto and his Little Faces preschool project in Seattle. We can't make this stuff up. And the beat goes on. Thank you Bennington for your part.

*Audrey and David today at a friend's wedding.*



*Audrey and David from 1962 for our 50th High School reunion.*

## Danielle Forestier

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Ok, Bennington was my only college choice, and I got to go! My life is certainly a different color than it had been in high school. Now, fifty years later we're asked to write about the experience. Why does this seem so much like I'm writing my own obit?

High school college tours convinced me that Bennington was my perfect fit. I really, really was rebelling at competing with my peers and wanted to explore my thinkings without judgment or ranking. And it turned out as I expected: Bennington allowed me to chase ideas and the guidance to shape my own opinions. I came as an art major who wanted to also study philosophy, music, literature, anthropology, world religions, biology, theatre, and each of the visual arts. Alas, that couldn't all fit into four years. After exploring religions in the philosophy department, I was sent over to tutorials with Bob Woodworth in the science department. What a revelation to approach both sides of that issue. That one BIG subject for my teenage mind was finally resolved by investigating, analyzing, and taking my thought processes down a trail that resonated logically with me. Paul Feeley approached my paintings in the same manner, and they became works that required as much thinking through as working on.

I married and both Sara and Chip were born while I was at Bennington. Their first academic years were at the Early Childhood Center. They each have kids now and are both raising them with thoughtful loving care. The





grandmother part of me is one of much satisfaction, bliss and tenderness, and unbounded love.

After Bennington I worked on my paintings for 12 years. As a hands-on Mommy I painted part-time, producing several hundred large non-objective paintings which I still enjoy looking at and thinking about. A few of those years were spent living in the Deep South, a geography very unfriendly to abstract work. Matching the sofa was the primary reason to buy art. It was difficult for me to market my own work.

In 1970 my husband was transferred to Europe. He was in the early developmental stages of computer science and was

attached to NATO and therefore our embassy. Our family moved to Holland. We enjoyed all U.S., Dutch, and NATO holidays, making most of our three-day weekends, so our first order of business was to trade our big, American car for a VW camper bus and off we went. Both children went to the local Montessori school, much to the disapproval of my husband's colleagues who thought our kids would suffer from the lack of an American early education. Having learned to read and write in other languages, neither one of them can spell well, but spellcheck was invented about the time they became adults. During their five years abroad they learned Dutch, French, German, and Latin. They were immigrants and learned that can be a blessing or a curse. They got their allowances, after making the conversion from dollars, in the currency of the country we were in on Saturday. The kids learned much more than could be taught in school and neither one has a bit of bigotry, racism, or intolerance for anyone different, and their minds go around the block before they make conclusions and decisions.

Three years spent in Holland. I was showing in a gallery, but just showing, not selling. I sold one painting in all those 12 years since Bennington.

With all the exposure to different things to eat, new ingredients and methods of preparation, my taste buds were fully engaged and I was interested in cooking. All of Julia Child's recipes were familiar in our house. We moved to Paris. Many inquiries with restaurants in France for an unpaid internship in their kitchen yielded only scorn. A woman! An American! But, the baker on the bottom floor of our Paris home said I could come and watch! Six months later I asked if I could come again. He replied "Oui, but not tonight" because market day was the following day and he would be too busy. Zut! I didn't have the language skills our kids had, I only understood the "Oui". So when I showed up at 3:00 am I was clearly in the way. His production was eight times more than the usual for a weekday and the tiny fournil was filled with stacks of pans waiting their turn to be baked. Each time I found a little place to stand, that place was needed for another tower of pastries. But I was wide awake and had no fancy to depart. And the patron was gloriously polite in not asking me to leave. How fascinating, so many things I didn't know how to make but wanted to, or that I had tried to make with disappointing results. Fifteen hours later I attacked two-meter-high piles of mixing bowls and utensils and washed all the tools from the day's work. And when I said "Thank you" he graciously replied "any time," which I understood! The next day, Monday, the boulangerie was closed, and you know where I was at 3:00 am on Tuesday morning. It was quickly apparent that the chemistry and biology in bread baking added a very interesting dimension to cooking, and bread baking became a

passion. A few months later, understanding all the foul language of the French learned from my colleagues in the very lowest of the French social strata, I asked for a formal apprenticeship and was told I was well into it. Eventually I followed these long, 12-hour days with night school to achieve Master Baker Certification—the first woman and the first American to do so—and came back to Santa Barbara in 1976 to open one of the first French bakeries in the U.S. "Les Belles Miches" received much critical acclaim for the quality and authenticity of its products. Sadly divorcing in 1982, it was far too much to manage by myself, and I turned to consulting for other bakers and bakeries.



Consulting offered travel: several times to Japan and Israel, Canada, all around the U.S. I rarely turned a job down that took me somewhere new. I would often come back a few weeks after the job ended, or return the slow way on the train. It was really interesting to be on my own in the back country of Japan where I could not read and just hoped I wouldn't be served insects when they brought me what I pointed to on the menu.

Somewhere along the journey I legally changed my surname from Schley to Forestier, honoring my grandmother. At the same time I was able to shed the first name, Dinah, and choose one more to my liking. I am now Danielle Forestier.

Marrying again, Warren Vail and I have traveled together to the Caribbean, Europe, Thailand, Singapore, and Burma. After a month in Burma off the tourist trail, I became impressed with these people, and their attitude toward the repressive and harsh political system they were living under, and the effect Buddhism seemed to have upon them. Followed that there was a period of activism for democracy in Burma and mentoring a Burmese refugee family, who have indeed become part of our family.

I recently retired. It is delicious to design one's own day. Ballet is a passion and we live in an area with many outstanding dance offerings. I can be found in the audience on most nights during the San Francisco Ballet season. The grandkids get theatre time with us and I like making things by hand or learning stuff, so projects and courses are always underway. I need to spend time in Burma again to get reading, writing, and speaking that language perfected. It's a tonal language, and I have not managed to become fluent on my own. And I'll never finish my book list!

The training to learn, analyze, problem solve, explore unfamiliar sides of an issue, think, keeps every day interesting. Thank you Bennington!

## Katharine Gregg

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When I received the 50th Reunion packet I knew at once I wanted to respond, but when I began thinking about it I realized what a daunting birthing experience my time at Bennington had been. In retrospect I understand I was driven to go there by forces that I only much later realized were my need to find my place in the world. At the time it felt—and was described by others—as sheer rebellion, but I emerged, still shaky, with a determination to be myself—whatever that turned out to be.

I was drawn to Bennington's music—Paul Boepple, Louis Calabro, Pernie, et al.—and literature, though with Barbara Herrnstein Smith it was literary criticism, not my own work. That had to wait for much later. I explored dance and took a leave of absence my junior year to study in Paris and finally get my mouth around that beautiful language. After graduation I went on to graduate work in English, first an M.A. at Mills College in Oakland, CA, where I filled in the gaps my freely constructed undergraduate feast had left. Then I started on the big time—a



PhD at the University of California at Berkeley. This was 1969, student riots, Vietnam War, Black Panthers, total chaos in the university, and total chaos in me too. After a month-long headache I realized scholarship was not what I wanted, and I finally left at the end of the spring quarter.

Then the real quest began. I fled back to Boston, my home base, and descended into a floundering soul searching and job searching. I began with publishing. What skill—other than the independent thinking I learned at Bennington—did I have? It was the heady time of Second Wave Feminism, and I quickly experienced the meager paths offered to women then. I remember fondly an exchange I had with an editor at the *Atlantic Monthly*. He pounded on about needing to start as a secretary at \$95 a week and then if I was lucky, etc. etc. I felt myself dissolve in my chair till I suddenly sat bolt upright, looked him in the eye, and asked if he had started as a secretary. He blinked and said, “No, of course not!” “Okay,” I said, “tell me how you did it.” And he did, and I listened and did the same.

By this time I was trying to write my own little stories, and I finally found that the publishing world—I was in the college textbook publishing (science!) field in the Boston area—left me no time or creative energy, so...I went into teaching. I thought the long summers would give me the needed space to write. For a while it worked out. I even awarded myself a two-year sabbatical to take an MFA in poetry at Vermont College. I taught primarily English and some French and even a bit of beginner's Latin till I was totally burned out and quit. That was 10 years ago.

I've continued writing poetry. I understand it's who I am, though I haven't yet been able to publish a book. My life of questing also took me to explore different kinds of indigenous spirituality. My most profound experience was studying Plant Spirit Medicine with Eliot Cowan, which led me into the Sacred Fire Community, a development of Eliot's apprenticeship with the Huichol Indians of western Mexico. I returned to publishing as the managing editor of *Sacred Fire* magazine for a while.

I see I've run over the word count, so I'll summarize. Bennington clearly launched me on my career as an *Uppity Woman*. I never managed to marry, but have two lovely great-nephews. I find getting old definitely a downer. Now I write a bit and read a great deal, have a house in rural New Hampshire with a garden (flowers and vegetables). It's really a big garden with a small house. I feel so grateful to have come to adulthood in the '60s, tumultuous as they were. I'm pretty scared about what we're facing at home and abroad but also find it exciting. We're about to experience some profound changes. It won't be easy or perhaps pleasant for those of us who have seen ourselves on top for so long. I worry a lot for my great nephews, and I'm very grateful for what I have. I would love to hear from any of my classmates.

## Sally Brenner Cooley Hammerman

Bennington College—what it means in my life:

I graduated from Bennington in '66 having fulfilled the goals I had enumerated at my initial interview in probably the spring of 1962: "I want to be an intelligent wife and mother." REALLY??? That's what I said???? And I remember it quite clearly as I had no idea what other goals I wanted to achieve with my life. I was probably a result of the times as that's what "good" women were expected to achieve. SO—as stated above re: achieving good wife and mother—I was married before starting my junior year and a mother-to-be in my senior year. Here's an anecdote regarding being "good" at Bennington.

From the age of three I was enthralled by ballet and took classes. At 11 years old, when my knees were in great pain, I was diagnosed with Osgood Schlatterer's Disease—the muscle over the patella was deteriorating. I had to stay off my feet as much as possible—go up and down stairs on my bottom, etc., and stop ballet. I was told by my doctor, once the deterioration stopped, that "modern dance" was OK—I think he assumed I meant the jitter-bug.

As I had been excited by and was part of the performing modern dance troupe in high school. I felt I wanted to pursue it in college, so I worked hard in the Bennington dance classes during my freshman year. I was told, however, I needed to take ballet as well. When Osgood Schlatterer appeared again I told my counselor what was happening. As a side element to this story and to our counseling discussions, I was seeing a young man from RPI and spending weekends there. Bill Bales, then the head of the dance department, said to me, on my request, to stop my dance classes without a "failure", that Martha (our ballet instructor) had the same disease. "Talk to her," Bill said, and he would give me the time off; I should resume once the disease cleared up. I puzzled about this but thought, "Well, maybe he knows more than I do." Talking with Martha I found that, no, she did not have Osgood Schlatterer's disease, but she was pregnant, so we talked about her pregnancy, how it effected her dancing, etc., and had a nice lunch. I took no more dance classes and focused instead on a variety of literature, archaeology, and art classes. When in my senior year I happily told Bill that I was pregnant, he said, rather scornfully, "Again???" And would you believe, it never hit me till many years later (30+) that I had a "failure" in dance because I didn't make up the classes. "Bill thought I was pregnant," I realized. "Oh well—it's a great story of miscommunication," I rationalized and chuckled, as it didn't keep me from furthering my education.

And that's another thing Bennington instilled in me—belief in myself—belief that I could always figure out a way to get to where I wanted to go. Back then, and it may still be true, we had to have our major chosen by the end of the sophomore year. I applied to the literature department as I enjoyed reading and writing. The response of the literature department was something like, "You have great and original ideas, Sally, but you are unable to write a reasonable paper—they go all over the map." I responded by saying, "I will take English/literature courses at University of Pennsylvania all summer and if I cannot write a paper by the first paper week (do you still have



those? papers in every course every seven weeks?) I will accept your refusal. So I applied myself all summer to the important activities I had coming up in the fall—my wedding and my papers. The summer was divided between studying, writing, and working on my wedding (another story). Suffice it to say that I spent my first two months of marriage at RPI's married student's dorms, sitting in an ugly green reclining chair laced with silver threads, picking at a hole in the arm and writing and rewriting papers for all my courses. I was rewarded by a letter from Bennington's literature department saying something akin to "Congratulations!!! You CAN write a paper and you are accepted into the literature department." My reply was, "I never want to write another paper again!" and I applied to the art department after taking one drawing class and being told that I had a good eye—I promised I'd do nothing but take art classes for the rest of my academic career. And I was accepted.

My parents, of course, said, "What are you going to do with art? How will you make a living???" Suffice it to say that in a variety of ways I used my art and my ability to write creatively and genuinely to get to explore many jobs from teaching preschool to illustrating for Planned Parenthood, to designing and creating the fabric art of wall hangings, bed spreads, and dresses (one of which appeared on the cover of Life magazine and more). THEN it struck me that I needed a job which could support me, so I went for a BSNursing and then on for a master's degree to where I am now: a clinical instructor for Drexel's College of Nursing & Health Professions. And now, I have JUST found my reason for going into nursing: I decided to become a lactation consultant. I'm working toward my IBCLC (International Board Certified Lactation Consultant) certification. I've just completed the 90 hours of didactic (with at least two reams of notes to study) and I'm beginning the mentored clinical portion. I'm hoping to be counseling before I'm old(er) and (more) withered—but what's more comforting than having as a counselor a grannie who's breastfed all four of her children—eh, sweetie?

On the side I assist my husband, who is a farmer—we grow true organic foods—no growth hormones, no pesticides, no weed killer, ALL natural!

So THANK YOU BENNINGTON for giving me the gumption and wherewithal to be able to find my calling and go for it!!!!



## Grace (Gay) Harriman

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I always wanted to write a love letter to Bennington, so now's my chance.

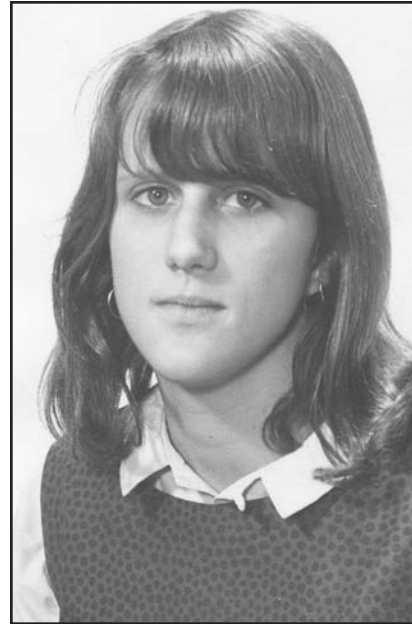
I remember seeing aged alumnae hobble about at reunions and thinking, "No, no, a thousand times, no." At 72, I stand up to be counted: Bennington was close to glorious.

To quote from "Fern Hill" which we read with Ben Belitt:

*Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,  
Time held me green and dying  
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.*  
—Dylan Thomas

I'm going to start with a few specifics:

1. My room in Bingham House was so messy I got called before a judicial board, the verdict: Clean your room.
2. I loved the isolation, maybe that was a foreshadowing, but young isolation can feel pretty luxurious.
3. Walking to Jennings for Lionel Nowak's Music I class with an outrageously glamorous girl from NYC (natch, wasn't that where all the sophisticated students came from?). It was 8:00 am in December and she wore a navy pea coat and a breathtaking amount of makeup, from creamy foundation to thick black eyeliner. By the time we reached our destination, her long, wild black hair was enmeshed in a thick cocoon of white frost.
4. Waiting on tables in starched green uniforms, and Mike, the head chef, would give us waitresses the best and the biggest helpings.



5. Staying up to dawn, banging out non-proofread papers on onionskin paper on my robin's egg blue Olivetti. Papers on Tolstoy, Henry James, Blake, Milton, Gerard Manley Hopkins. The papers always used the phrase "form and content." I still have no idea what that meant, but it sounded serious.

I was learning to love ideas, differences, discussions, the moment when a classroom jumps to life, the very intimate process of reading and writing. I was even learning to be confused and know it meant I was onto something. No small gifts from a college.



For some wild reason, I believed all of life would be like Bennington...fascinating, challenging, and fun. Why on earth not? A *Time* magazine article wrote, "All Bennington girls sit in trees reading e e cummings." So what was wrong with THAT?

Graduation was a rude shock. I did a MA at Brandeis, where nobody cared what you thought or felt about words. You opened your mouth to utter comments as dry as footnotes. I knew something was really wrong when a fellow graduate student announced the topic of his term paper in *The Victorian Novel*: "I will be writing on *The Role of the Nursemaid in Jane Austen*." To make matters worse I had to take a course with the appalling title: "Bibliography of Bibliographies." Now that is one hell of a leap from Ben Belitt's *Poetry and The Imaginative Process*. Mr. Belitt often used a Blake quote: "How do you know but every bird that cuts the airy way, is an immense world of delight, closed by your senses five?" I couldn't remember the quote when I was in my sixties, I called the college, and they gave me his phone

number in a nursing home. I called him and he was overjoyed, "Yes, yes. Now wait a minute..." Then he said it word for word, paused, and added: "Now what about that Pablo Neruda." What a sweet phone call that was.

I headed back into progressive education, teaching English and Chinese history (I've been to China 13 times to travel and volunteer teach) for 36 years in two progressive schools in Cambridge. Bennington for the 5–14 year olds.

Schools where the kids called you by your first name, where they let me teach Chinese History all year, at a time when the Massachusetts MCAS tests allotted two questions on China: 1. Who was Confucius and 2. What dynasty built the Great Wall? Those schools kept the Bennington fire alive. I had found home again. I still feed off my teaching, the challenge of bringing fine literature and complex history for a class to dissect, the rowdy humor of seventh and eighth graders.

I think Thoreau said "I have travelled extensively in Concord." Well, I finally left travelling in Cambridge and moved to Bath, Maine. I like it here. I have a big garden, I write poems, read, and quilt, and then start the cycle again. I have three children ranging from 45 to 26. I have a black dog named Willa after Willa Cather.

Everyone on these pages knows getting old is no picnic. Too many questions I should have figured out, but know I haven't and probably never will. Maybe the meaning of form and content is one.

Bennington held you just where you wanted to be—if it was poetry, lively class discussions, and naps you wanted, then love and money and working and being responsible would have to wait.

Blessings to Harold Kaplan, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Ben Belitt, Mr. Parrish, to the mountains and the fields, the mocha cake at the Rainbarrel, a French restaurant in North Bennington.

Blessings to my beloved life-long friend Connie Wallace who lived on in Bennington for many years and surely would have burned a few pages here with her love of the college. Even blessings to all those NRT's when we got ejected into some city for a drudge job to learn what real life was like. We had plenty of years for that after Bennington, why rush bad news? Blessings and thank you.

## Susan West Hirsh

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These Reunion Notes...they seem like practice runs for writing our obituaries....

I went to Bennington in 1964, a transfer from Skidmore College, to find a place to think and learn, unfettered by constraints imposed by more conventional schools; also, to get away from the conformist life I thought my family wanted for me. I grew up in the tail end of an era that still thought women "belonged in the home," should focus more on how they looked and less on what they thought and wanted to say or do. Even as a child, I had trouble accepting the girl role, knowing that boys and men had all the power, and often so much more fun! I was a feminist before I knew what



that was, before it was even a part of our lexicon. I just wanted respect, to be listened to, to find some control of my own life. I had great hopes for my Bennington experience, and it delivered.

My primary interests at Bennington were government, history, and political activism, which quickly expanded to include anthropology, which I pursued at Harvard as well as at Bennington. With the support of Bennington and my advisor, I spent the better part of my senior year, including NRT, in Cambridge, at Harvard, working on my senior thesis on the illegality of the U.S. presence in Vietnam. I also got married in the middle of our senior year (undoubtedly another way to escape family control), to Dan Ingersoll, an anthropology student at Harvard.

That first marriage was both exciting and terribly hard, with intense experiences that helped mold my later interests and eventual work as a clinical social worker. We moved a lot (more than 25 times over 14 years), working on archaeological sites in the East and across Canada, as well as farming and raising cattle in Massachusetts, Maryland, and Canada. We lived in an intense, heady academic world, as well as a hard "real life" world of farming, crops, cattle, and horse traders. None of it made money. For a while, we were landed immigrants in Canada. I became a great fan of a national, single-payer healthcare



*An older, brooding picture of me, at the beginning of my single parent years.*



*Recent photo of me and husband, Philip, doing what we like best, walking outside by the Chesapeake Bay.*



*A very recent picture.*

system. During those years, while waiting my turn at graduate school, I was a researcher, editor, and proofreader, and worked on field excavations and catalogued artifacts. I also learned to dehorn and castrate cattle, put up hay, baked endless loaves of bread, and cooked many meals for hungry farmhands and archaeology students. And, we raised two children, too! It was an exhilarating and exhausting life and my daughter remembers me crying most of the time.

Following a divorce in 1979, there were 10 challenging years for me as a single parent with two children, while I worked as a medical record director at two Maryland hospitals and tried to manage these two different worlds, kids, and work, which demanded so much of my time, energy, and resourcefulness. It was the toughest and longest-lasting downer I ever faced and taught me to be resilient, flexible, and try to hang on to my sense of humor, even in the most dire circumstances.

I always felt I profited most from my downs, not from the ups, which are fleeting and feel good, but don't leave a mark like the tough stuff. My years as a single parent were certainly my biggest challenge. There was also a big downer for me at Bennington. Late in my senior year, my car, along with all my belongings, including my provocative (at that time), unfinished thesis about the illegality of our being in Vietnam, was stolen off the streets of Cambridge, MA...NEVER TO RETURN! With the help of my advisor, Leonard Rowe, I had a flash oral exam, which included French journalist Jean Lacouture, and then, at their insistence (no time to wallow in despair), I feverishly wrote all I could recall from my work. It was daunting and Lacouture encouraged me, recounting a story of John Steinbeck leaving his original manuscript—*Travels with Charley?* or was it *The Red Pony?*—on a train. My last ditch efforts passed muster and I graduated.

With marriage to my second husband, Philip Hirsh, in 1989, I was able to finally go to graduate school, obtain a master's degree in social work, and work for 20+ years as a licensed clinical social worker in a state psychiatric hospital for children and adolescents. I also worked with hospices and bereavement programs on the side. My interests by that time were mostly in those people I viewed as "living on the edge"—adolescents, the elderly, struggling young women—and my work was all about them.

I met Philip at the hardest time in my life and he made me laugh and have fun, like I never laughed and had fun before. We have a good life together, with five children between us, ages 38 to 54, and eight grandchildren. We are retired now, transitioning and grappling with the aging process, moving more slowly, finding our body parts don't work like they used to work. We've had big highs together—whitewater canoeing, flying in bush planes over the tundra, medical mission to Haiti, lots of travel, fun family moments. But, though still active, things are slowing down. We've done the big downsizing thing, sold our big home in Virginia and have moved to a townhouse on Maryland's Eastern Shore. We are signed up to eventually move to a nearby continuing care retirement community (CCRC), but have already turned them down once.

Looking forward, I am discouraged and dismayed that we as a nation, and mankind in general, seem to be regressing, not moving forward as a global community, not learning from past history and mistakes. We sadly continue to discriminate, to kill and destroy, not only other people, but the planet as well. I feel my people activism hasn't

produced much. In these retirement years, I'm turning my interest to enjoying nature and advocacy for saving the planet, inspired by botany classes at Bennington with Robert Woodworth. His time-lapse photography of plants enthralled me. He made xylem and phloem, even rotting trees, utterly fascinating. His enthusiasm for all things living was infectious. He planted a seed in me that continues to grow, a final gift from Bennington.

Afterthoughts:

—I am a committed feminist and continue to belong to a feminist book club back in Virginia.

—For years, I continued to look for my stolen car. It never was found.

Cheers to my classmates, both here and those no longer with us.

## Ruth Hornbein

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Primary interests: printmaking (etching, woodcuts), literature, and sweater design.

The Bennington education emphasized pursuing one's interests. So, rather than going in a conventional direction, I chose to start my own business and do something that satisfied me artistically, even though it didn't satisfy me financially.

The ups are doing what I loved doing and the downs—not making money for my old age.

I never had children, but dote on my nephews, niece, and great nephews and great nieces. I got married “late in life” in 1998 to Steven Barrada, a guitar player/composer, whose music thrilled me.

I loved Bennington. The friends I made there are still my closest friends. I took the courses that were of interest and had great teachers. It was a time of change and my generation attempted to do things differently. Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. We experienced a lot of things and, for me and many of my friends, we didn't get down to being serious adults until we were in our 30s. We were the Bennington free spirits and learned a lot because of it.

After graduation, I moved to Boston and got a job working for a friend who had started a magazine about sailing. Not only did I know nothing about sailing or sailboats, I was terrified of the water (still am). But the friend/publisher, Bernie Goldhirsh, was so exciting and inspirational (he basically wanted to change the world), that it didn't matter.



I moved to NYC in the late '70s and worked for another start-up magazine. It wasn't as interesting as it was working for Bernie so I quit and started my sweater business. I had been making sweaters using my drawings and graphing them. It was an easy union of art and commerce for me. At that time, one could survive on very little money. I was able to live on unemployment until the orders started coming in. I can't imagine being able to do that today.

After 25 years of doing this, business slowed down and I got a job working at a little boutique on the Upper West Side (where I continued making and selling my sweaters

*At Liuda Dovydenas' Daughter's Wedding.*

on a smaller scale). It was fun up there and I would run into Bennington alums—always a treat. Unfortunately, the greedy landlords kicked out all the little businesses on our block and then the recession of 2008 hit. We tried to hold on, but it was too much. The store closed in 2013, but the website continues and I continue to make sweaters for it. I took a job at another children’s shop, this time in Park Slope. Oddly enough, I don’t run into Bennington alums there.

At Bennington, our teachers took us seriously. Everything was open to us. I remember once mentioning to my painting teacher that I liked a certain artist. He told me to call him up and visit his studio. We were serious contenders.

## Jean McMahon Humez

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Reading through the reunion memoirs for the 1965 class, I note that mothers are often at least partly responsible for daughters choosing Bennington. This was also true in my case. My mother, who had always wanted to write fiction herself, imparted her love of reading and writing stories to me, and knowing about Bennington’s strong creative writing faculty (doubtless from her avid reading of *The New Yorker*), she suggested I apply. Despite my initial prejudice against a single-sex college environment, I visited, was impressed with the campus and the conversational interview, and applied for early admission.

But I was miserably homesick that first fall semester—missing my close-knit family, friends and my high school boyfriend (who had gone off to another college in upstate New York). Everyone else on campus seemed to be much more creative and interesting than myself. (As a New Englander, I was surprised and intimidated by the preponderance of high-culture sophisticates from New York!) And the less said the better about the dating scene of that era, in which Williams College

featured so prominently. On the positive side that first year, I was instantly captivated by my assigned roommate, Megan Parry—a free-spirited artistic personality and kind friend who helped ease my rocky transition to a residential campus. Gradually I connected



*Jean with daughter Andrea, 1976.*



*Bennington pals Elin, Sally, Jean and Loren on a hike, Tucson 2006.*



*Alex, Andrea, and Jean at Andrea's high school graduation, 1992.*

with other kindred spirits, including lifelong friends Sally Bowie, Loren Siegel, and Elin Fleischer Leonard. (As a congenial foursome, we had a suite together for our last two years.)

My course work provided a wide variety of insights and pleasures, as well as nudging me along into my future career path (which did not turn out to be fiction writing). I took Physics I from Mr. Lawson, who had us spend the whole first semester trying to figure out the contents of a mysterious “black box.” I took Music I from the composer Henry Brant, one of Bennington’s delightfully offbeat music faculty. I sang in an impassioned performance of Bach’s *St. John’s Passion*, conducted by Paul Boepple. I had a great time in a two-year German language course with Mrs. Hasenclever. In

From Hobbes to Marx, I heard the first feminist critique

I can remember, as applied to the justification of lower salaries for married female faculty hires. I had a poetry seminar with Howard Nemerov (in which I did not excel), and for reasons I can no longer remember, I never took a fiction writing course. Still, I majored in language and literature and worked most closely with two of the division’s literature critics, Barbara Herrnstein Smith (Milton, Pope, and Keats) and Stanley Edgar Hyman. Mr. Hyman’s Myth, Ritual, and Literature class was truly a life-changing intellectual experience for me, stimulating a permanent interest in the history of religions and in orally-transmitted culture.

My Non-Resident Terms were absolutely invaluable experiences in preparing me for later work. In three different social science research placements, I built relationships with supervisors, got an insider’s look at research organizations, and gained a strong sense of self-confidence as a competent employee. And of course the NRTs (in two cases) were in exciting new locations (Berkeley and Manhattan). I loved learning to function as a young working woman, paying (some of) her own rent, but not yet tied down to any particular long-term job.

But when I went on to graduate school at Yale University in 1966, I experienced an even more severe culture shock than I had in my first year at Bennington, as I readjusted from the Bennington emphasis on individual creativity and fun, and its institutional dedication to taking women students seriously. In high contrast, at Yale, in the English Department of the late 1960s, I experienced an arrogant, self-congratulatory, stifling aca-



*Jean just after retiring, 2008.*

democratic atmosphere. Yale had only admitted women undergraduates very recently, and sexist attitudes were openly expressed by some professors. I gritted my teeth and made it through to the PhD only because I resolved that I wouldn’t let them get the better of me.

And so I entered an academic career that I hadn’t exactly chosen. I probably would have left early had it not been for my discovery of the Women’s Studies movement while in my first job in an English department in the early ’70s. In 1975 I was hired into a newly created faculty position in interdisciplinary Women’s Studies at the young urban campus of UMass Boston. There I had the opportunity to participate, with great colleagues and students, in building a new department. Now called Women’s and Gender Studies, it offers a major, has tenured faculty, and is well integrated into the overall curriculum. When I retired in 2008, it was after 30-plus years of work that had actually felt important at the time—socially as well as intellectually meaningful—and had certainly been rewarding, enabling me to build and use people skills as well as academic skills. (Even so, I admit that I am glad I retired at age 64, because if I had had to read one more stack of student papers, I would have gone stark raving mad!) Along the way I also had the pleasure of doing research and writing in American women’s cultural history, publishing several books and articles related to women’s spiritual leadership and autobiographical writings.

Back in 1966, right after graduating from Bennington, I married that high school boyfriend, Alex—who has also retired, after a dual career as a freelance writer of books on language and (in his day job) a writer of software documentation. We are celebrating our fiftieth (gasp!) anniversary this year. Our daughter, Andrea, who has been working in educational research, lives in our area with her husband, and most of our closest family members are also within arm’s reach. Lacking grandchildren of my own, I have learned to borrow time with the young children or grandchildren of several friends. This has turned out to be a great arrangement—I get to play with them pretty often, with no specific obligations or complex family dynamics to keep me awake at night.

I have continued to be involved as a volunteer with various projects of colleagues at UMass Boston, and when Alex and I downsized into a smaller house in 2008, I enjoyed kibitzing with the contractor during the gut rehab process in the new place. Thanks to retirement, I have also had the time to learn some Spanish, travel (in recent years spending a month each winter in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico), get to Maine more often, do more walking, gardening and bird watching, and generally indulge myself disgracefully. I know it’s a cliché, but Life Is Good.

I am hoping to hear from or catch a glimpse of many “lost” Bennington friends this year, such as Sue Carroll, Marg Kallman, Olivia Koppell, Kate Garnett, and Megan Parry Brill. (If I don’t see you at the reunion in September, let’s be in touch by email!)

## Nan Foster Kilbourn-Tara

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My years and relationships at Bennington probably formed me as much as anything other than my time in Greece living as a member of a family there. Both experiences were in fairly stark contrast to my life before and challenged it. Both experiences still bring up amazingly sharp visual images, deep emotional connections, and a great many joyful and painful memories. Neither experience do I regret.

Bennington was not an easy place for me but those were not my easiest years. It encouraged my lifelong questioning and gave no easy answers but it helped me find what I wanted to do and would remain doing.... Working with my hands in clay and searching with groups. I have had a truly fulfilling career as a production potter for 50 years, profoundly taught on many levels by Stanley Rosen in his cramped studio where I spent endless hours. I finished Bennington not only with the tools of my trade but also with an unconscious feminist confidence, having never questioned for a moment that a woman could succeed as well as a man as a potter. So I did, majorly supporting my two children after an early amicable divorce. They thrived in our



fairly simple life in Maine where studio and daily life could be side by side, a life shared with my partner in a second marriage, which has lasted over 35 years. My daughter Laela at 48 is a documentary cinematographer, son Jaben a physical therapist about to become a first-time father at 45. They continue to amaze me and be a huge part of my life. Home building for them has been a lifetime occupation for my husband Joe and me, designing and building together five different houses/studios, and surviving it. We are nest builders!

At 72, I find the pace and rhythm of my life changing in a way that pleases me, even if I am still a self-questioner. I now have a flexibility in my studio life and choose not to throw functional pots eight hours a day, but now enjoy working with another artist on a line of tiles and other clay projects, stretching and experimenting. I still own and curate a gallery, one of several I have had over many years, so I spend much time there involved with other artists and marketing my work. But there is the time and opportunity for



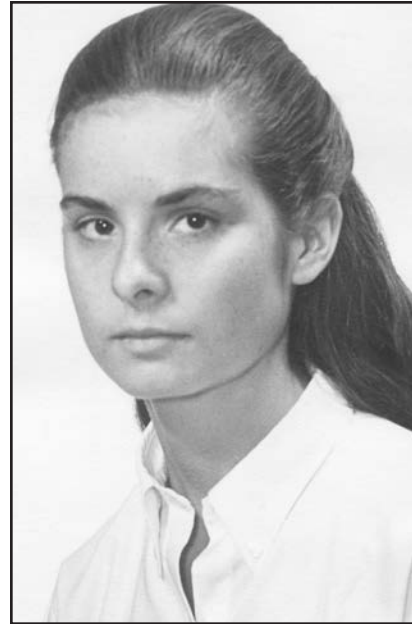
other choices of the things that matter more and more to me, like yoga and the hours of both vegetable and flower gardening that have always been closely connected to my pottery.

An unexpected gift is the return into my life of my dear Bennington pal Grace Harriman, who lived down the hall in Bingham, stayed up all night writing Ben Belitt papers with me, and donned green uniforms each night to wait on tables! She has moved just five minutes away and we have the same laughter-filled, complicated, deep connection we did at Bennington.

So, I guess one grows, changes, and stays the same!

## Sheridan King

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I was drawn to Bennington for reasons that have helped shape my adult life: freedom from rules; education as dynamic inquiry and open investigation; invitation and encouragement to pursue ideas with unbridled creativity; and access to nature and wilderness. Some of my favorite classes were Stanley Edgar Hyman's Myth, Ritual, and Literature; Kit Foster's Shakespeare; and a botany class focused on trying to save the Dutch elm trees along the entrance driveway.

Jane Robinson and I created a class with Margaret DeGray to study and discuss Eastern thought and religion (which at that time were somewhat inaccessible). We met at Margaret's North Bennington home and often drank tea throughout our discussions. It was also a blessing to work with Ben Belitt on my senior thesis. Walks in the woods, especially during fall color, made me dizzy with joy; occasionally I would fall into step with Howard Nemerov who also spent a lot of time outside. It was perhaps the space between the words rather than our conversation that I most remember in our meanders together.

Before beginning a career in education that would span nearly 40 years, I took time out working with horses, sailing along the California/Mexican coast, and acquiring an MA in counseling psychology from the University of



California, Santa Barbara (a wonderfully nontraditional program). After a number of years teaching and counseling at the high school level, I became a community college counselor at College of the Sequoias in Visalia, California (for nearly 20 years). It was truly amazing to be so well-matched to a job!

For 35 years and counting, I have spent summers as a guide and mule packer in Yosemite National Park (in the high country). There are five high Sierra camps set approximately seven miles apart in the wilderness which are seasonally set up and supplied by a pack station in Tuolumne Meadows. After helping to set up the camps I guide saddle trips around this high Sierra loop and take specials on 8–10 day trips into the backcountry (usually as pack support for hikers). How lucky I am to have wonderful guests, great mules and horses, and be able to spend so much time in the crown jewel of the national park system!

In addition to this life-long equine affair, I have become involved in a meditation/spiritual practice. Although meditation and spiritual teachings have been part of my life since college, my practice has taken on a much larger portion of my time since my retirement from counseling. My guru/teacher, Paramahansa Yogananda and the teachings of the Self-Realization Fellowship have given me a very rich and rewarding focus for my "elder" years.

I have had a life partner since 1976, about half of which time has been in marriage. Although I do not have children, I've become a great friend/mother to his son and daughter and am a very proud grandmother (to two kids now in college).



I welcome any contact with classmates or any other Bennington alumnae. It was very interesting to read what members of the class of 1965 had to say; I'm eager to read about all of you. I stopped taking pictures as part of my efforts to simplify my life, so the photos are not current.

## Lise Koht

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Even though I was born in New York City and went to high school in Washington DC, I spent most of my childhood in Europe. I lived in Portugal, France, Norway, and Denmark, learning a new language almost every second year. I had to study two years abroad before I could return to the U.S. for an education in a language I could understand and hoped to master. By then, my parents had moved on, as they were accredited to Bonn in Germany. Completing the Examen Artium, taking the College Boards, and picking up my American passport, I spent my summer job earnings on an Icelandair flight to the States and the Greyhound bus to Bennington.

Given the opportunity to choose my own major, I selected the topic of color, working with colors and learning to understand all aspects of colors within physics, psychology, and visual arts. This curriculum was unique, and I could only have gotten it at Bennington College! The opportunity I got was enhanced by being offered in the rural Arcadia of North Bennington, giving a vital counterpoint to the rush and severity of the work to be done.

An important aspect of our time on campus was the excellence and abundance of the food we were served: American, with a twist of Polish cuisine. From my NRT earnings I even got bagels and chicken salad sandwiches for hard nights' work on the ever larger canvasses I had to submit for the final exhibition.



*At the new opera house in Oslo by her son Espen Koht.*

To top it all, we had some very original and some truly great instructors: Dr. Van der Linde, who was teaching calculus with Deutsch patience and compassion, Dr. Blake lecturing with Austrian baroque humor on a shrinking stage, set for Genet's *The Balcony*. Unforgettable. As a consequence of his seminar on The Mind of the Artist, I got to write an article on Edward Munch's use of light in painting, which I later edited and translated for a monthly magazine in Norway.

Dr. Apgar became my tutor for the senior year and as a physicist he instructed me in optics. However, he also guided and encouraged me in the optic artwork I undertook—he even showed one of my moiré paintings at a physics exhibition. Dr. Apgar told me about the work on visual perception of Dr. Harry Helson at Kansas University.



I wrote to Dr. Helson, and as luck would have it he got a National Science grant to have me work at the University setting up and running an experiment for him for my NRT experience.

Winter in Kansas might beat that of Vermont, in being colder. At -37 F I was spending most of my time in the laboratory, running shades of gray behind a "neutral screen" for 40 or so graduate students and, later, joining them for Dr. Helson's lectures. The small frame house I rented could not keep the cold out, and all the pipes froze solid. After some time the Seventh Day Adventist plumber came to my rescue Sunday morning. He spent hours in the drafty space under the house, and I learned to keep a house warm at all times. Dr. Helson liked my work, offered me study opportunities at Kansas and later, he and his wife even came to my graduation at Bennington!

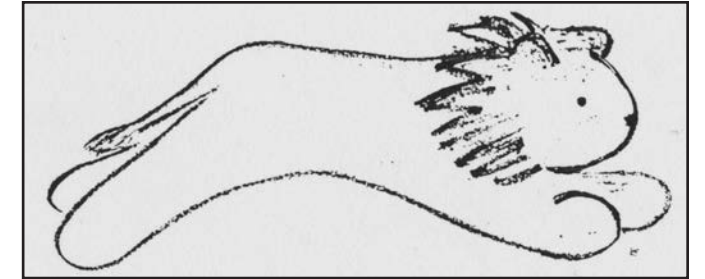
I will not dismiss the fact that the New York NRT period was exceptional. The kindness and generosity of the Seides who took me in, and the exhilarating times and events of New York of the '60s were beyond comparison, even for a shop girl. It let me get to know the New Yorkers and the city where I was born.

None of us will forget the blackout of our senior year. In the midst of the scare and turmoil the kitchen staff kept up its good work, and served us a proper dinner—though cold. Seeing an announcer, on a battery-operated TV, only lit by a candle, was pretty bizarre. Trying to find causes on a Ouija board was just crazy. We were lucky to be in the countryside: It has made me conscious of the need to manage, take care of each other, and keep your sense of humor in "dire" situations.

By not going to Kansas, I missed the opportunity to become an experimental psychologist as such. Doing this in Oslo was soon proven impossible, due to the dissolution of the specialty at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Oslo. However, most of academic life was soon disrupted by the student revolt of '68. I worked in various areas of social and clinical research and with clients in prison and children with social problems. Seeing the political climate as an opportunity, I gathered some intellectuals, actors, and other artists and formed the first New Feminist group in Norway. Lobbying city hall, writing and publishing a street paper, *The Stocking*. The group became well known, as it ganged up with other organizations for women against the broadcasters of a sarcastic series of programs turned against women.

Eventually I came into my own stride as I got into professional journalism. Conducting tests, involving children at play, drawing and taking photographs, I became a specialist on toys and a feature writer for a monthly magazine. See drawings submitted. When I came to Geneva, Switzerland, I made more artistic use of the camera, and participated in several exhibitions there.

My children attended an international school close to Geneva, and qualified for college. My son went to Dartmouth, and my daughter, naturally, to Bennington. Then on to Cambridge University and London School of Architecture, respectively. I am involving myself with environmental issues, since having been invited to participate in the "International Electric Car Rally" from Gothenburg to Oslo. In order to live in safer houses I try to keep a small off-the-grid cabin by the sea. If any of you are interested, feel free to get in touch.



*Illustration by Lise Koht.*

## Olivia Koppell

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Bennington students and grads are a self-selecting group. It's not the college for everyone. So the question isn't so much how did Bennington influence me/us as much as what did I/we expect and desire to "extract" from the experiences there. "There" being in one of the most beautiful states of the U.S. I chose Bennington because it was "different." I didn't see myself as a number in a big university and being from New York City I longed for the country. I arrived as a young (16 years old—too young) freshman very unsure of herself. I graduated as a young woman very unsure of how she wanted to proceed. I was very aware from the start what a luxury it was to spend four years in beautiful surroundings doing whatever was of interest at the time. And I made life-long friends. I never really left Bennington in that every year since 1966 I visit at least once, if not more, to spend time with friends or participate in concerts/events. I majored in music, in what I would call one of the golden periods in the College's history. It was exciting.

I loved the faculty in all areas of study. After my first year, one of the best things I did was move into a faculty apartment in Dewey House with Judy Dunlop (lawyer) and Ruth Draper (dancer). Those "digs" were a luxury and we giggled ourselves to sleep every night. After graduating I continued in music—switched from violin to viola—became a professional and traveled the world with various orchestras. I freelanced in NYC when it too was in its "golden" period. I still play with American Ballet Theatre, which I love, as well as participate in chamber music concerts. I married quite late—and became a mother quite late. My daughter makes me smile and has become a wonderful person and artist. I consider myself a late bloomer in every sense of the word. But it's nice to turn 70 and still feel one is "blooming." I'm learning bridge, I have a great book club, I take a ballet class, volunteer with Parents in Action, and turn my frustration with "the state of affairs" into almost daily letters to the editor. I can say that I learned to "speak up" at Bennington.

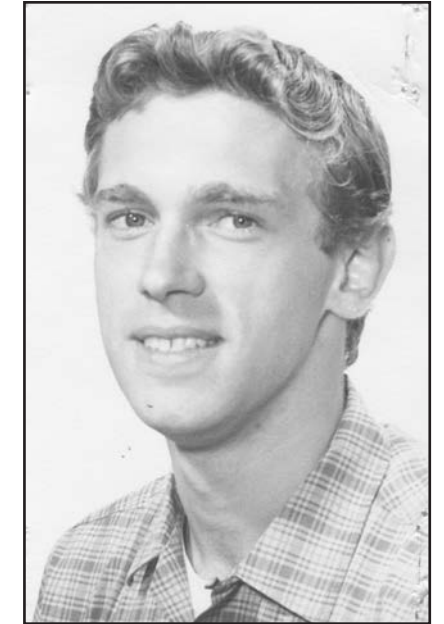


## David Jon Krohn

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I majored in modern dance, minored in theatre. Just before my graduation, I left for New York City to dance on tour with José Limón, an icon of modern dance. (Bennington mailed my diploma after a chastising pause.)

I moved in with Kathryn Posin, my long-time girlfriend and we knocked around NYC dancing and trying to stay alive. I drove a cab to make ends meet, eventually left José to dance and tour with Anna Sokolow and moved into a loft with fellow Sokolow dancer Eddie Effron. Our loft on 18th Street was formerly a phone center for the Italian mob—we found bushels of "donation" stubs all for \$50 to the "Italian American Soccer Club." I broke my leg (in jazz dance class) and while recovering I gigged as technical director for the Juilliard Dance tours. There I met and fell in love with Linda Jane Karin Yoder. She moved into the loft, we threw great parties (the mob left a 20' carved wood bar, glass shelves, the works) but tired of the city's crime and grime. Eddie and I bought 100 acres of land in Bradford, Maine (I still have it), and Linda, Eddie, Bill Dunas, his woman, and I went to "live on the land." It lasted a month. The black flies, mosquitoes, and lack of plumbing drove us out and Linda and I set out for the west. We landed in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where I joined The Mime Experiment mime company and toured with them. Still restless, we left New Mexico, drove up the west coast, and landed in Eugene, Oregon. Linda worked at a hotel and I cooked in an all-night greasy spoon and became tech director for the WOW Hall—a small concert venue. We were called back to Columbus, Ohio, for the new artist-in-schools program, where I formed a few mime troupes and Linda and I developed a



duet (dance/mime) show which we did for decades. Our mime/dance company (AUK) toured Canada twice and did a lot of gigs in Ohio. Linda and I then formed the Moving Arts Company, but eventually—after 15 years and one great son, Ramble Jon Krohn (now the well-known musician RJD2)—split up. I fled to Europe to escape the pain. Found an old friend/dancer and babysat for her son in exchange for a room. That enabled me to stay in Norway for almost 9 months, where



*Dancing a section of my full-length piece, "Autobiography," 2012.*

I toured my solo show, taught, and performed at the local Hovik Ballet Studio (I camped in their studio).

Back in the USA, I continued artist-in-schools work (still do a bit), worked as an electrician, and married Becky Rogge Ogden, a music teacher. That lasted five years. I returned to Europe several more times, choreographed for the Hovik, camped the ENTIRE time, rode a folding bike, and saw a lot of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece. Norway has the best scenery and nature of all the 20 countries I've seen, with Iceland a close second. The people of Scotland are great (Brazilians a close second), and Edinburgh might be my favorite city. All the big cities have campgrounds—European camping is much nicer than the US (hair dryers in all the johns). Camping allows me to stretch my \$ and biking meets a lot of great folks. In the US, I continued to perform my solo shows, tweaking a combination of storytelling, dance, and mime. Still do.



*David and Naoko Krohn, Chicago, 12/2013 after our wedding.*

Had a handful of great girlfriends, but Mary was the best. A long blond singer who could dance, we lasted seven years. I go dancing, often alone, in bars and clubs. I travel and dance in other cities. Amsterdam, Oslo, Stockholm, New York, Philly, Boston, Bangor, Chicago, DC, as well as smaller towns in between. The schedules are remarkably similar: DJ or band starts around 9:30–10 pm. From then to about 11 pm, the dance floor is EMPTY! I go out and start to improvise (modern, contact improv, break moves), and often a few come out to dance with me. Sometimes the drunk bachelorette, or the competitive break-dancer, but it's usually good-natured and seems to seed the dance floor, and by 11 it's too crowded for me to have fun so I leave. I'm probably in a lot of cell-phone videos on YouTube.



*My signature dramatic mime (1970–95).*

Gigging as an electrician at the 1st Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbus, I met Naoko Kobayashi a Japanese national who worked at the Church. We started going to the clubs. I spent most of my life until 2008 living in other folks' homes and trading handyman work for a room. I finally bought a fixer-upper in a great neighborhood—Clintonville. My son helped me pay it off. He wrote the theme for *Mad Men* (TV show), tours the world, and is quite successful. I choreographed "Working Together" for a local dance festival and found Naoko was comfortable



*I toured Europe and choreographed "Lost and Found" on the Hovik Ballet, in Oslo, Norway in 1988.*

improvising. We fell in love, she moved into my house four years ago. We got married (third time's a charm) and are having a good time.

I am the tech guy for the Columbus Dance Theater, design some of their lights and sets, do the occasional old man's role (Polonius in *Hamlet*), and perform in their theater. I collaborate with my long-time friend, the composer/musician Les Kleen. We founded a men's lunch group called "Flatulus Antiquus" (old farts) and we terrorize local restaurants every Thursday. I am Chair of the Atheist-Skeptic-Humanist group of the 1st UU Church (Atheists in Church!) and we present a secular-themed service every summer. I exercise (used to work as a personal trainer), bike, dance, ski and—at 72—am having the best time of my life. Thanks, Bennington, for getting me off on the right foot.

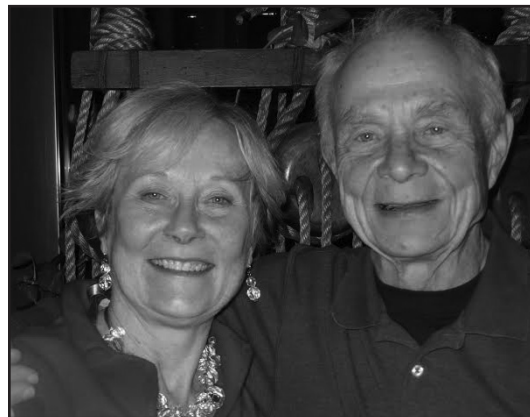
## Thea Comins Lahti

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At Bennington I majored in literature, where the wonderful faculty introduced me to poetry and a much expanded notion of a literary canon. In hindsight, I think that I really majored in three things that Bennington prides itself on “teaching”: intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and arts appreciation. Bennington gave me the confidence to pursue my interests wherever they take me, the ability to analyze my own and others’ ideas, and the “fine art of appreciation.” My father taught me to love art, but at Bennington I learned that I loved watching dance—all dance. I have a lifetime of dance memories that I cherish and favorite dances from Graham to Balanchine to Bejarts to Tharp to Morris. I learned that I love reading poetry—from Donne to Eliot to Stevens to Sexton to Strand. Love of music came later, and now encompasses music from many times and places, from string quartets to works by John Adams, from blues to “world music.” For this and more, thank you Bennington.

I’m not a person who discovered their one abiding passion at Bennington...or anywhere else for that matter. I’ve “tacked” rather than “drilled” my way through life, but I’ve had a wonderful time grazing in various meadows. Along the way I married, had two wonderful daughters, divorced, got a graduate degree, had a career that could either be called checkered or diverse, remarried (happily this time), been a hiker, biker (pedal powered), downhill skier, and a dog breeder. (For the past 20 years I’ve bred and shown Irish Terriers. I attribute the last interest to a childhood surrounded by animals and a horse fixation that needed to be “downsized” to a more manageable species.)



### What ups and downs have I experienced?

**Downs:** A difficult divorce with young children, a challenging midlife career shift, and more recently, various orthopedic surgeries—precipitated, no doubt, by my habit of wearing out various joints hurling my body at the world. I’m currently working on getting my new metal knee to behave, and have high hopes of returning to hiking, biking, and skiing. (Stay tuned....) The most serious challenge I’m now facing is that my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. Caretaking is exhausting, and Alzheimer’s

*Abbott & Thea Lahti.*

is a cruel fate. Hopefully one day there will be a cure for it, and for the other diseases that rob people of productive lives.

**Ups:** Being a mother, watching my babies develop into wonderful, interesting, and competent women. Having a full professional life, especially the last two decades when I had my own organization, a development consulting firm. Marrying my husband Abbott when I was 47 and exploring the world, both man-made and natural, with him. Watching my two grandchildren flourish and grow. Being nurtured every step of the way by rich, deep friendships with a group of remarkable women.



All in all, I’d give my life a pretty good review, though looking at what I’ve written, I think it looks more orderly and peaceful than it has sometimes felt. During those times it seemed like I was in white water, not sure whether I’d come out the other end paddle down. I could say that might be the true cost of a Bennington education—charting your own course down life’s rivers...but that is such a groaner of a metaphor that my professors would surely have circled it and suggested that I rephrase my thoughts!



## Nancy Lloyd

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I attended Bennington from September 1962 to December 1963, plus two NRT's. It was a time of distress in my life, but the college allowed me a safe space to begin figuring things out. My goal at 18 was to become a beatnik, not knowing that era was over. Bennington allowed me to keep the conceit that I was superiorly intelligent and could do anything I wanted to do. I have done just about everything I aimed at, learning along the way that "intelligence is as intelligence does."

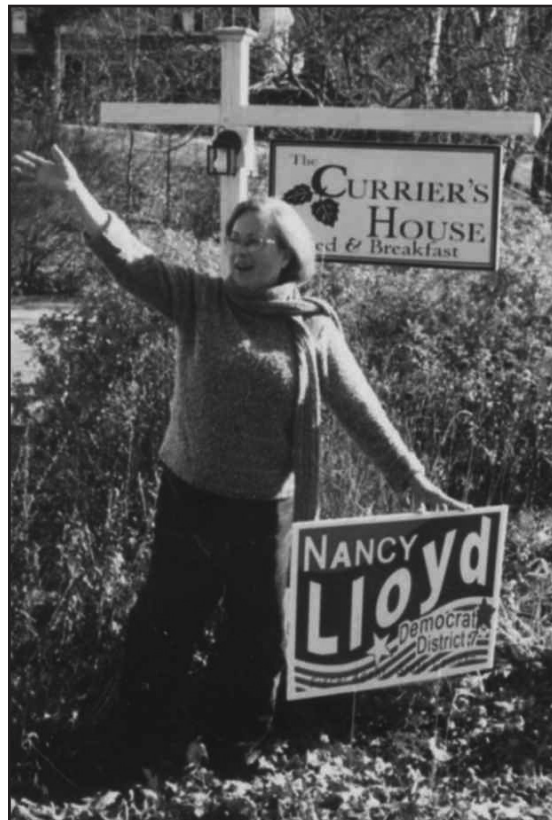
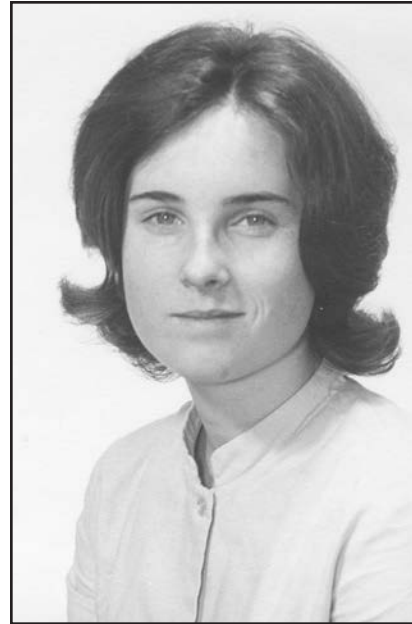
Some things I remember well: discovering the history of art, discovering drawing...was it Sophie

Healy who led the life-drawing classes in the loft above the dining room? I determined to read every book my favorite authors wrote: James Joyce, Virginia Woolf—I only got so far. Monsieur Guy was responsible for my success in speaking and reading French years later in the Peace Corps. I was angry that I couldn't take Myth, Rit, and Lit in my first year and that my advisor in the second refused to tutor me in the *Faerie Queene*. Now teaching composition, I remain humble in the face of my paper, "Marx and Man," poorly summarized in less than one page!

In the spring of 1964 I moved to Manhattan and stayed for 30 years pursuing a freelance career in costume design, management in small business, and non-profit theatre. Late in life I described myself as a creative problem-solver, and that's what I did well, working for major designers in small studios. With designer Carrie Robbins we had success that you would recognize with *Grease* and *Saturday Night Live*.

Best friends still are Joyce Spector Zeller '66 and Barbara Matthews Furstenberg '66. Joyce and I spent most of our third

*I ran for the NH legislature and luckily lost!*



semester on the road, visiting friends in colleges far and wide. We dropped out at the same time and were roommates until I introduced her to her husband. Barbara and I were roommates at Bennington, then took countless drawing classes in NYC. We were part of an interconnected set of friends and husbands for many years. I love them still.

I completed a design degree at the Fashion Institute of Design, SUNY, and a BA in art history at Hunter College, SUNY, and an MA in writing at NYU. At 48, I left NYC and became a Peace Corps volunteer in Tunisia ('92-'94) where I taught first year students at a small college. Surprisingly, in 1998 I opened my own bed and breakfast in Jaffrey, New Hampshire. I continued teaching first year students in composition at Franklin Pierce University. No biological children; 12 nieces and nephews, their spouses and children, a goddaughter, and three teenage boys who needed boundaries.

Life is good! Take risks! Enjoy it all!



*Joyce Spector Zeller, Nancy Lloyd and Barbara Matthews Furstenberg at our 25th Reunion.*

## Joan Anne Maxham

(aka “Joani” or “Joan” while at Bennington)

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I moved to New York City after graduating from Bennington in December of 1966. Manhattan has been my home ever since—Greenwich Village until 1976 and the Upper East Side to date.

My various interests have remained primarily the same while attending Bennington to the present: theatre arts, music, dance, visual arts.

I graduated in December 1966 with a degree in drama.



According to my Mom, Bennington would be the perfect place for me—progressive! I could help design and create my own curriculum and best of all the teachers were all working professionals. Good choice! (I was a bit “difficult” as a child—I was euphemistically labeled “high strung” ....)

My favorite working professional teachers: Sy Syna, Bill Sherman, Ben Belitt, Claude Fredericks, Jules Olitski, Marilyn Frasca, Martha Wittman, Manuel Duque, Ion Laskaris, David Hamilton, and Frank Baker. Favorites because they both encouraged and challenged me to do my best work.

My work scholarship—in the college Library—provided interests and skills which I did not even know I had and which I utilized often for survival after graduation. I worked in two of the Metropolitan Museum’s many libraries—The Robert Goldwater Library and The Photograph and Slide/Image Library, both of which have been recently assumed into the Met’s “Watson Library.”

NRT was a particular favorite of mine—providing students an opportunity to briefly leave the college and work for several weeks in their field of choice. A memorable Non-Resident Term was working in Theatre a la Carte in NYC.



Joan Anne Maxham recording in W.C.’s Westbeth Studio Bethune Street, NYC, 1985. Sound Engineer: W.C. Conway.

My junior year was spent in absentia at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, one month at Graz University in Austria studying German and two graduate-level summer courses at NYU. (I was astounded that even with graduate level work I received only a half-year credit at Bennington for my “A” efforts—an indication of the exceptionally high standards of Bennington College.)

At my mother’s insistence I returned to get my degree. You know, “something to fall back on,” even though I was chomping at the bit to get out and work in New York theatre.



Actors’ Equity Association members proudly march in the Fifth Avenue Labor Day Parade in solidarity, September 2015.



2004 Headshot.

**From 1966 to 2000** I worked in theatre, TV commercials, film, and cabaret in NYC. I continued my acting studies with Uta Hagen at HB Studio, NYC.

**From 1989 to 2009** I worked primarily at The Metropolitan Museum of Arts—as a Special Events Greeter at night (“actors” are particularly good at that) and during the day in the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas curatorial department working as an assistant to Douglas Newton for two years. After he retired late in 1990, I moved to The Photograph and Slide Library/Image Library as library associate for image reference: working the reference desk and helping curators and NYC professors assemble slides and art images for their various visual presentations. A highlight for me was assisting Francoise Gilot assemble a particularly interesting show. Those things resonate....

### Work history as it relates to my Bennington studies:

**Theatre arts:** repertory theatre, off-broadway, TV commercials, film.

**Music:** I created the children’s musical “Wilderfree” and have sung in New York in three cabaret shows, the last being “In My Lady’s Garden,” a solo show which showcased me as a singer/songwriter. I have also recorded three CDs of original songs.

**Dance:** At 19 my first professional performing arts job was as a dancer in the chorus at The Gaslight Village Opera House, NY—summer stock, I loved it—that bliss lasted one week - the lead performer quit - they pushed me into her part - and my dance career was over ....

I still dance every day anyway.

**Visual Arts:** Metropolitan Museum of Art—a glorious place to work—from 1989 to 2009, at which time I retired.

**But do Bennington people ever retire?** I doubt it.... I am currently working on another musical, targeted for Broadway—the process is excruciating but presumably well worth the effort. It may never make it to the boards but I will give it the Bennington try!

**Bennington College: Additional memories and thoughts**

**Rima Gitlin '65:** The admissions people encouraged Bennington candidates to stroll around campus and get a feel of the place. I wandered into an auditorium and saw this beautiful creature—I was watching her dance, so lovely and lyrical, a mesmerizing strawberry haired vision. She saw me watching and came to the edge of the stage to talk to me. I don't recall the actual conversation, but I know it helped me make up my mind to definitely go to Bennington. Thanks, Rima!

**As a homesick freshman:** Sophomores **Hope Norris '65** and **Joanie Kassman '65** were so kind and supportive—they befriended me and helped me get oriented. Thanks Hope and Joanie!

**Zoe Noyes '68** taught me to accompany myself on guitar. I sang and played for tips in what was then known as “The Freudian Slip” cafe on MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village. I usually made about \$15 in one evening's work which was quite a lot of money at the time. I could actually buy a nice meal for myself and perhaps even a friend too. Yaaay! Folk guitar was very popular then. I played other people's songs until I began writing and composing my own. Thanks Zoe!

**Bennington Students who have had an enormous impact on my life:**

Gretchen Langheld '70, Andrea Dworkin '68, Jane Becker '68, Zoe Noyes '68, Holland Taylor '64

**Senior Class Project:**

Bill Sherman was a huge help and encouragement to me in the area of stage design. One heartbreaking day when we were painting sets, his young son appeared in the doorway holding a limp bunny in his arms. “Dad, I can't get Barney to wake up.” Bill just looked at me and said softly, “I'll be back tomorrow....”

I was lucky to have gifted freshman students as my actors for my Brechtian version of “Hansel and Gretel”—adapted with original music, designed, and directed by me. A wildly challenging senior class project, and my talented actors came through beautifully: Anya Cronin (Ormsby) '69 as Gretel; Marsha Flum '69 as Hansel; Laurie Eliscu '69 as the Candy Cane Witch; Lori Lawrence '69 as the guitar-playing Dog; Kathy Girard '69 as Candy Cane Girl; Martha Weiss (?) '69 as Candy Cane Boy.

Thanks to all!



*Joan Ann Maxham '66,  
Bennington College Graduation.*

**Andrea Dworkin '68:** After seeing me in a Repertory Theatre production Andrea asked me to play her in a film she wrote (*The Cloister*) about her experience of being arrested for protesting the Vietnam War. I was stunned because we were ostensibly physical opposites .... After talking, we connected on a deeply personal level, and I agreed. (Andrea passed away in April 2005, leaving those of us who loved her bereft.)

**Gretchen Langheld '70,** a lifelong friend, directed the film. Gretchen, a brilliant musician and composer, has been a lifesaver on more than one occasion—playing clarinet, sax, and percussion for me on various CDs.

“**The President is Dead**” was heard over the sound system in the Commons - (at first, many of us assumed they were referring to Bennington's President Edward Bloustein—which stunned us...how awful...we wondered what on earth had happened to him—but when the actual details emerged about JFK ...we were overwhelmingly in shock ...)

Claude Fredericks and other Bennington instructors would conduct compelling classes on the campus lawn—students and teacher seated on the grass under the trees. Instead of being a distraction, the outdoor classes seemed to heighten focus.

“**Embryology of the Chick**”: Seriously! I really *really* did not want to take a science class, but the above strangely appealed. Unsurprisingly, I don't recall anything at all about it....

**Last note:** I must say I am humbled and so very proud when I read of all the many impressive accomplishments of fellow Bennington alums.

## Megan Parry

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My stay at Bennington was brief; I was asked to leave at some point in my sophomore year.

I came there to find what I had hoped for: artistic, ironic people who loved books, movies, and music. I was irresponsible and unconfident, and occasionally indulged in petty crime, but I valued the friends I made at Bennington, and at Williams and Marlboro colleges, too. The one faculty member I remember is Vincent Longo, and that with gratitude and affection.

Since those days, I've remained close to a cherished Bennington friend, and stay in touch with a few others. I raised two kind-hearted, generous,



hard-working, smart children; and am grandmother to four. My second (stable, companionable, adventurous) marriage has lasted—what—46 years! We are based in the fascinating city of Detroit, but spend six months of each year in a creaky farmhouse of western New York State.

I still love books, movies, and music. I've made art I like, and maintain a website for anyone who's curious at [www.meganparry.com](http://www.meganparry.com).

Julie Snow's thoughtful essay in last year's book prompted me to consider writing this. It's been interesting mulling about my motive(s); at the moment, I think there is one: to rejoin this community, briefly and finally.

## Stefana Sirotof Paskoff

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I arrived at Bennington in 1962 with several years of classes in New York City's New Dance Group behind me. I remember enjoying dance technique classes with Martha Wittman and chair dancing with Jack Moore. That winter Adolphas Mekas came to campus one day looking for extras for a movie he was filming in the area. I and several other students ended up hanging from trees in *Hallelujah the Hills*.

In the middle of my second year I had to take a leave of absence because I was pregnant with my first child, Lisa. My second child, Chris, was born in 1965.

I continued my studies by stages at Towson State and the University of Maryland at College Park, and finally at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where I graduated with bachelor's and master's degrees in education. I taught classes on women in contemporary society and child care skills at Women's Studies College at the University at Buffalo.

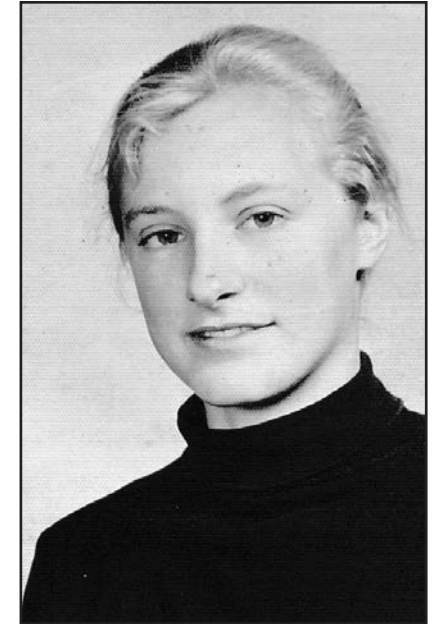
I taught in several daycare centers before starting my first public school teaching position at the open classroom / mixed grade level CAUSE School. I continued teaching in the Buffalo Public Schools, specializing in the natural sciences, until I retired in June of 2000.

I have continued to take dance classes off and on over the years, including modern, folk, and urban line dancing.

When my children were in high school I began working as a volunteer at the Buffalo Museum of Science. I participated in a number of archaeological expeditions with the Museum's Curator of Archaeology, excavating Paleo-Indian sites in New York State and Mississippian sites in Tennessee. In 1986 I assisted in excavating, measuring, and cataloging 18 skeletons in a mass grave outside the Revolutionary War outpost at Fort Laurens, Ohio. I also cataloged and created a computer database of the Museum's collection of several hundred examples of Mississippian Pottery.

Over several years, in connection with the Museum, I assisted in collecting samples for the North American Comparative Lithic Samples Collection of stone tool making materials and their geographic sources. This invaluable archaeological resource is now housed in the Smithsonian.

I was president of the Western New York Archaeological Association from 1989 to 1990.





In 1990 I took a leave of absence from teaching to study Archaeology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, attending field school for a summer in New Mexico.

Shortly after separating from my first husband in 1989, I met my current husband John Schimminger. We have been together for 25 years, married since 2000. In retirement I have enjoyed volunteering as a reading tutor with various organizations including Literacy Volunteers and the Starlight Gallery program operated by the Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York. I visit regularly with my extended family in the Hudson Valley. There, in the Catskills artists' community of Woodstock, where my late aunt bought a cabin in the 1940s, the family still gathers.

## **Judith Penelope Dunlop Ransmeier**

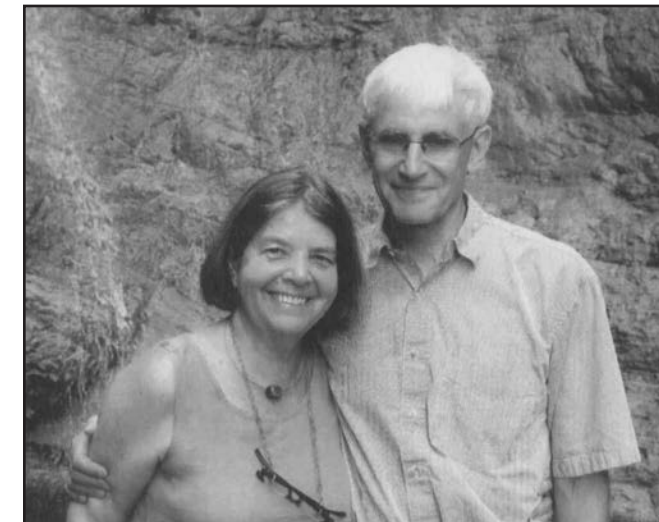
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Poaching eggs.... Inexpertly throwing pots.... Just two random Bennington-acquired skills.

Having spent two NRT's in law-related jobs—U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division (1965, just prior to Selma) and the NY Solicitor General's Office (1966)—my post-Bennington life was heading in that direction. The Peace Corps was an option. But when I was offered a job as a housemother at Boston University, law school was a logical choice.

Ted Mulligan (Yale 1966) and I married at the end of our second year at BU Law. Ted was diagnosed with leukemia in the winter of our third year. We graduated and with Ted in remission we headed to New Hampshire, I to the NH Attorney General's Office and Ted to clerk for the NH Supreme Court. Happily, we were able to practice and travel until suddenly, we were not. Ted died in 1971.

I moved to a large private practice. I believed I would leave NH. But the thought of another bar exam and, most importantly, meeting my lovely future husband John Ransmeier (Amherst and Michigan Law) kept me in Concord. We married in 1974. John continues to practice as a trust and estates lawyer and is an ACTEC Fellow.



*Judith Ransmeier, March 2016.*

I practiced full-time until our first child, Johanna, was born. Abigail and Peter arrived soon thereafter. Johanna, Amherst and Yale PhD, is an assistant professor of modern Chinese history at the University of Chicago. Abigail, Yale and Yale M.Arch, is an architect in Boston. Peter, Amherst and Temple Medical School, is a family doctor who is coming home to Concord to practice. All three are married and have a child each.

Although I spent the bulk of the kids' childhoods parenting and serving on several boards, I continued to practice part-time representing children, primarily in the area of child protection.

When I first came to NH I began potting again for fun and over the years I've continued to noodle in var-



ious media from textiles to glass and lost wax casting. I was member of the Board of Trustees of the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen for about 25 years.

About 10 years ago I became an inactive member of the bar. (Random fact: I was only the 39th woman to become a member of the NH Bar.)

After stopping practicing, I immediately threw myself into docenting (perhaps inspired by my awesome architect Abigail) at the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Zimmerman House, owned by the Currier Museum of Art. I subsequently added museum docenting to my life. With continually changing special exhibits as well as a terrific collection, this is a stimulating occupation.

I sing with Songweavers, a women's chorus and with Songhealers, a smaller group that sings at hospitals and hospice.



John and I travel when family and job commitments allow.

In the spring of 2015 I was able to spend several weeks in Hong Kong babysitting Johanna's almost-two-year-old Viola while Jo taught a course for Chicago. Macau, Hong Kong, and Tokyo with a toddler and a dynamic daughter, what a grand adventure!

More to come we hope....

## Jane Wood Robinson

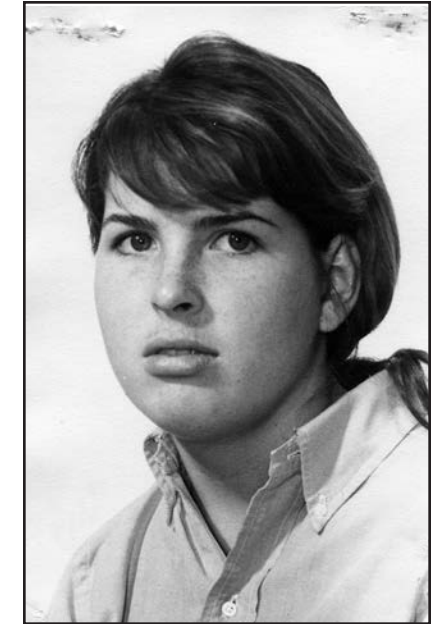
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My primary interests have always been to stay as awake as possible and pursue what is true for me.

As far as subjects of interest while at Bennington: studio art and mathematics and Chinese thought. I was too self-pre-occupied to take advantage of all the wonderful other subjects Bennington offered to me.



*My nephew's wife, Amy, and I having high tea for my 70th birthday*



Today I am pursuing my main interests: to be awake and present to each moment of each day. In a friend's words, I am "doing a Thoreau" and have been most of my life: living a simple country life of firewood, landscape gardening, growing organic vegetables, prayer and contemplation, watching clouds.

I have tried also to always serve my community: A) as a public school teacher, B) as a field archaeologist, C) as a naturalist, D) caring for the elderly, E) teaching meditation/stress reduction etc., and F) author/illustrator of a children's book in 1992.

Bennington supported me enormously (unlike Vassar where my mother insisted I spend my freshman year.... Those ladies were interested in clothes and men).

At Bennington I was told not to regurgitate ideas I had been given. I was told if I didn't know what I was doing I could leave. I was told the most important task I could accomplish was to learn to think for myself. Later, now some years ago, a distant neighbor had multi-age Bennington summer gatherings. How wonderful all those ladies were and what an affirmation (of Bennington).

Everyone who truly experiences life has ups and downs. Attachment, when it ends, brings sorrow. Joy is marvelous but usually fleeting, etc.

I have always been extremely religious. I was born that way. At Bennington I had to learn to accept myself. After that I studied Christianity, Hinduism, and lastly Buddhism (for the last 22 years I have taught Buddhist philosophy, meditation, and yoga). These three religions at their heart are the same; it is only in their concepts that they differ.

I live alone and have for most of my life. My sister, Judith Bond, loved Vassar, completed her four years there and went on to achieve two master's degrees in science. I read books such as  $E=mc^2$  for entertainment. My favorite science subject is natural history. My favorite author is Richard Fortey. I listen to the Red Sox on the radio (you have to belong to something).

Bennington was one of my most important experiences. It taught me that a person could be very smart, very different, and 100% perfectly OK. Thanks, everyone.

## Ellen Beskind Safir

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Bennington was the first college I ever saw, and I first visited in my freshman year of high school with my father. He, a Dartmouth grad, was in love with Bennington as his beloved sister, Joyce Beskind Grodnick '44 attended the college. He was a big fan of Becca Stickney, who was in his sister's class. I certainly did not appreciate the differences between Bennington and the other colleges I visited from the academic perspective or philosophy until way later. I did, however, relish the physical setting, the remoteness, the intimacy of the college in a small town.

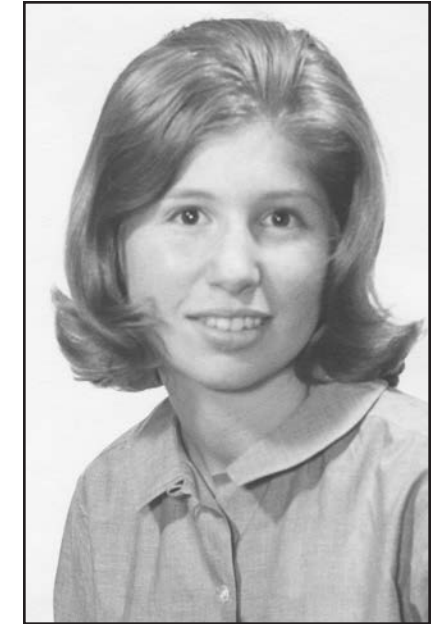
My major was social science. I also loved making art and thinking about it, and will never forget classes with Paul Feeley; I regret dismissing making art as a life's work. Stanley Hyman's class Myth, Ritual, and Literature also opened my mind to thinking I had not done before.

I was fortunate enough to have a car, and I loved driving all over the back roads nearby. I learned how to turn quickly onto a dirt road and turn off my lights if a cop tried to chase me at night. My fond memories of a first love also come back when I think about the College.

Today, my other-than-work interests are art—both historical and contemporary—fishing, and the opera. I enjoy going to museums and galleries, and even some of the art fairs, like Frieze in London and Art Basel Miami, because there you can see the work of artists from all over the world at one time. I am willing to travel far to see wonderful exhibitions. A year or so ago I went to London just to see the late works of Rembrandt, for me a once in a lifetime experience, which was thrilling.



I am a fly fishing angler. I love stalking a fish, casting to it, and watching it take the fly. I fish in Wyoming, sometimes in Pennsylvania, and occasionally we have a grand adventure, say, to Argentina. Peter and I hike into Grand Teton National Park, or Yellowstone, and the surrounding areas, to fish. Mostly we are on our own, and there is some danger involved, as we have run into moose, bears, and other creatures, but as long as we are healthy and steady on our feet, we will keep doing it.



### How did the Bennington experience influence your direction in life?

It was an influence on the overall approach. Most importantly not “accepting,” but coming to grips with why things were the way they were, and imagining a different way. This was useful as I addressed the disappointment of my first marriage, and being a single mother, and managing a career and a business.

One had an open mind at Bennington, and there was figuring out how to solve problems in a new way, rather than relying on how something had been done before. After getting my MBA, my career in investments evolved and the puzzle solving began! Markets and investing environments change so the puzzle pieces need to be revisited, and there might even be new pieces to use to solve the problem, and people to help me solve it. Running my own investment firm to manage for institutions such as endowments and pension plans, which I started 14 years ago, involves constant reflection, self-awareness, and nurturing of others. Given that I was/am building a non-traditional business, and managing a flat organization where the best ideas can come from anyone in the company, the open mind approach is necessary.

### What ups and downs have you experienced?

Heck, I am going to be 72. Is there a 72-year-old who has not experienced ups and downs? The “ups” have been having a loving partner and wonderful grownup children who are successfully making their respective ways in the world, capable of having good relationships and being wonderful parents. Along the way of course, kids are challenging, and hopefully you are a better parent as you have more of them, and where you have made mistakes maybe they are somewhat repairable. A big “up” is having three grandchildren, and likely more on the way.

“Downs” have been dealing with breast cancer, career challenges, caring for my dad as dementia took over his life.

### Do you have any family notes you would like to share?

My mother and father lived to be 97 and 99, respectively. I had the joy of having my dad live nearby for the last 25 years of his life, so we had many family occasions together.

### Are there any comments you wish to make on the past, present, or future?

I can't predict it. I just want to savor my many blessings, and give back to my community in some way. I am active in a program that brings Title 1 kids to independent schools in this area for summer enrichment so they don't fall behind. I also have helped the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with their endowment investments.



*Ellen and Peter in Petra.*

## David Schreiber

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### Ruth Felsler (deceased September 2012)

Four children: Benjamin, Joshua '95, Yonatan, and Vered '07.

My Bennington story really begins in August of 1965 when I married Ruth Felsler—the outcome of a summer romance, which began in June of '63 and lasted until her death in Sept of '14—and moved up to Bennington from New York so she could complete her final year at the College. In November of that year I joined the Bennington College community as theater tech director and from there managed to convince admissions to let me become a student too. This also helped to keep me out of Vietnam by providing me with a student deferment.

I had been a pre-med/chemistry major at CCNY when Ruth and I met, and I saw Bennington College for the first time when I came up to visit her there. I was a graduate of the High School of Music and Art in NYC, which seems to have been a major feeder school for Bennington. On an extended visit during my spring break, I had a chance to sit in with her in some of her classes and was recruited to play some chamber music and sit in with an impromptu orchestra by a couple of women from M&A who remembered I played fiddle. What I experienced in those classes and reading sessions made me feel that I had found the magic mountain!

At M&A I had seen the most promising and talented of my fellow music students studying at Julliard Prep and was convinced that I didn't have the stuff to make music my career even though I loved it. Thus CCNY and a science major. Bennington, and Ruth, gave me license to follow my bliss as well as an approach to the study, which expanded my horizon enormously, not to mention a great teacher and mentor in Eric Rosenblith, who secured a full scholarship for me to pursue a graduate performance degree at New England Conservatory.



But much more than this, the Bennington experience gave us both a flexibility of mind and joy of learning that we took with us. No matter where or how we found ourselves, Ruth found something to turn her hand and mind to which served her and our family. After we graduated Bennington, we began taking turns: one would study and the other would work to support us. Our first child was born in North Bennington while Ruth finished her thesis and I my senior concert, while teaching music in the Bennington Public Schools. (She delivered the finished thesis and went into labor that same evening!)

When we moved to Boston with our infant son so that I could take advantage of the scholarship at NEC, Ruth found a course in leather-working at a local adult education program and made and sold sandals and purses. When I finished

*The family upon arrival from Israel, 1988.*



*Ruth at home (Passover, 2012).*

my program and began teaching and freelancing, Ruth took classes at Harvard extension and did an MAT at Simmons College. Our second child was born in Cambridge.

When I accepted an orchestral position in Haifa and we moved to Israel, Ruth found a program at the University of Haifa to become an ESL teacher. She delighted in studying Hebrew and became sufficiently literate that she could read and enjoy contemporary Israeli novels and poetry.

After our first tumultuous year, we joined a kibbutz where Ruth created an outstanding English program for the children of our kibbutz and surrounding communities. I performed and toured with the kibbutz chamber orchestra and worked at various jobs on the kibbutz. I became very fluent in Hebrew but remained functionally illiterate until I was drafted into the Israeli Army and found myself part of the first invasion of Lebanon. That is a story of karma biting one in

the ass! I had successfully avoided the draft in the U.S. during the Vietnam period only to find myself, at age 38, a combat infantryman in that invasion and occupation. But I did finally learn to read Hebrew while I was there. From comic books to newspapers to translations of James Bond and mystery novels. There was nothing to read in English until....

Recovering from dysentery (of all things!), lying in a field hospital for I don't know how long, I was stabilized and sent back to my unit where a couple of my buddies prepared the foulest smelling, foulest tasting tea from some local herbs. They poured it down my throat and it really worked! After a few more days with strength returning I was sent home to recover. To go home I simply went to the road and hitched a ride with the first Israeli vehicle that would stop for me. It was a small pick up truck and when I climbed/fell into the truck bed I found it full of books! In English! With their covers torn off. Once again I thought I had died and gone to heaven.

Rummaging through the heap I found a science fiction book by Spider Robinson about dance in zero gravity. There was a character in it whom I recognized immediately as a friend from Bennington: Liz Richter. I was certain I was hallucinating! And she was even identified by her married name: Elizabeth Zimmer. At a Bennington reunion a decade or so later I met Liz and confirmed that indeed it was she.

Ruth and I found the kibbutz to be as close to an ideal child-rearing environment as we could imagine. It was community which even has a place for adolescents to be productive members. We thought we would be there forever so nine years after our second child we decided to have another pair. Ruth used to call them the gift that Israel gave us.



*Ruth and David (1980).*

When the first intifada broke out in late 1987 I felt we had to return to the U.S. I could not continue to serve as a reservist in the Israeli Army to suppress an uprising I felt was completely justified. Our eldest son was about to turn 19 years old and would have had to go into the army shortly for his three years of regular service. He and I returned in winter '87-'88 and Ruth and the three younger ones joined us in June. Our second and fourth child are both Bennington grads too.

Ruth immediately found work teaching English as well as basic business skills, computer literacy, accounting, and economics to immigrants. I worked with my sister in a concert music special-order service, freelanced as a violist, and taught violin privately. By the end of the '90s it was clear that our music business was not going to survive the internet and that I wasn't going to get into the Boston Symphony in this lifetime, nor could I stand touring—the only other way an orchestral musician gets a decent paycheck. This is where that flexibility of mind that Bennington cultivated really paid off. I reinvented myself! I am now a Certified Financial Planner® and an investment advisor specializing in sustainable, responsible investment with no exposure to fossil fuels. My studies were done entirely on my own, online. I feel certain that the kind of education that Bennington offered, that of practicing the discipline of the subject as a method of study, is what gave me the both the intellectual tools and the confidence to do it.

## Loren Siegel

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Bennington was my mother's idea. At age 17, I didn't have a clue about where I wanted to go to college. She had wanted to go there in the early 1940s, but her parents deemed the college too avant-garde. She decided that if she had daughters, she would send them to Bennington. And so she did—all three of us—beginning with me. The first couple of years were hard as I struggled to transition from going to an urban high school with over 4,000 students to living in this tiny school for women in the mountains of Vermont. My sense of isolation was fierce. By my junior year, though, I felt entirely at home.

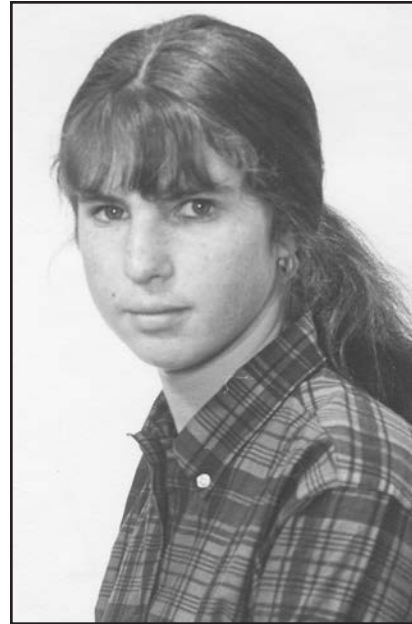
Memories: The Rainbarrel in North Bennington with its incredibly delicious fruit tarts; smoking pot in my car, a Checker Marathon I inherited from my parents; the day of JFK's assassination; clam chowder and grilled cheese on Fridays; the Bennington Ladies Jug Band (me, Stephanie Spinner, Julie Snow, Jane McCormick, and Megan Parry) in which I played banjo and kazoo. Also Myth, Rit, and Lit; *Bleak House* with Barbara Herrnstein; Senorita Lluch; Martha Wittman's dance classes.

Looking back, I can see that the most valuable skill I learned at Bennington was how to do research and write. All those papers! More than anything else, my writing is what has opened doors for me on my unplanned but very satisfying career path. After graduating, I spent a few years back home in New York City, working as a secretary and trying to figure out my next move. After a couple of false starts, I ended up going to Rutgers Law School

with the goal of becoming a "people's lawyer." I founded a small, community-based law office in Brooklyn with some friends in the mid-'70s, but soon moved on to the ACLU national office, where I spent the next twenty years—the last decade as the organization's communications director. Along the way I got married, had two children, and got divorced.

Today I'm semi-retired, still working as a communications consultant in the movement for criminal justice and drug policy reform that, after so many years of frustrating setbacks, is finally moving in the right direction. I love working with the

*Me with my kids.*



young advocates and activists who have joined up and treat me and my old war-horse colleagues with some veneration. My current priority is working to close Rikers Island, NYC's very own penal colony. And parenthetically, it's been great to get to know Bennington literature professor Annabel Davis-Goff through this work.

I never remarried but have been "going steady" with Art Cabrera for the past 20 years. My daughter, Cary Graber, is a TV producer and my son, Matt, owns a moving company. They are, all things considered, my pride and joy. I have stayed in close contact with my closest friends from Bennington. Just came back from a week in Tucson with Elin Fleisher Leonard, my roommate in Welling House for two years, and I spend time every summer with Jean McMahon Humez at her beautiful house on Jones Pond in Maine. Every few years the three of us get together with the fourth member of our little circle, Sally Bowie Paulsen, and enjoy each other's company as much as we ever did.



*Me and Art.*

## Joyce Spector

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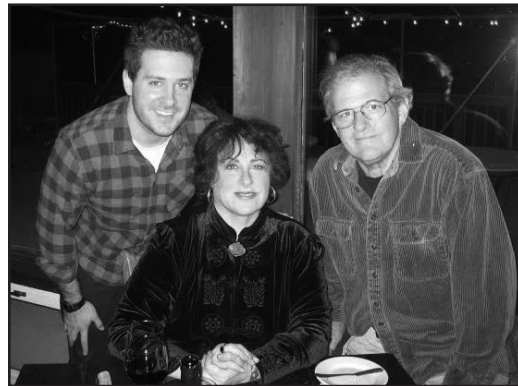
My absolute first choice for college was Bennington, but since I thought I'd never get accepted in a million years, I also applied to Sarah Lawrence as a shoo-in (how's that for youthful innocence?), and Syracuse as a back up because I had a full scholarship. I was rejected at Sarah Lawrence, but accepted at both Bennington and Syracuse. I told myself I was rejected at Sarah Lawrence because I brought my mother along for the interview.



That would not have been a "plus."

But, boy, did I luck out. My high school told me I was the first student ever accepted by Bennington and I feel that pride to this day.

I had multiple creative interests—writing, design, dance, art, graphics—but I always wanted to be an architect and was incredibly fortunate to be assigned Professor George Holt as my very personal teacher. After realizing I would probably have to sit at a lonely desk, in a giant, drab office drafting other architects' designs for at least 10 years before I could even imagine designing my goal of innovative, low-cost urban housing, I decided not to wait.



*Zeller Family.*

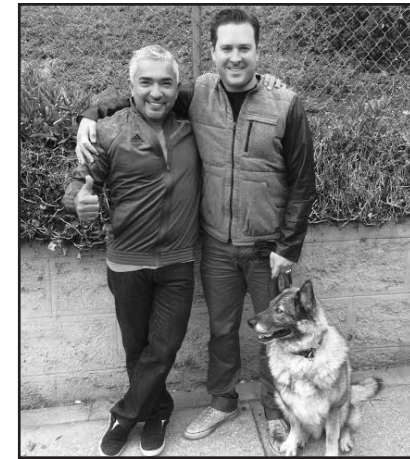


*Cabin with lilacs.*



*From across the pond.*

I left Bennington one semester short of completing my sophomore year and headed to the elite Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theater in NYC where I studied with the renowned acting teacher, Sanford Meisner and graduated two years later. Though brutal to many, Sandy really liked me and told me I was very commercial which I took as an insult, not realizing that it meant I would work! And so, I started to pursue an acting career.



*Cesar, Evan, and Amigo.*



*Back deck with view.*

Nancy Lloyd '66, my Bennington buddy and still dear friend, was also in NYC working in costume design and introduced me to a guy named Gary Zeller. Scre-e-e-ch.....

Then the plans went kaffloey.

You know the expression "madly in love?" After two years of living illegally in blissful sin in a raw commercial loft in the then war zone called Alphabet City, I gave Gary an ultimatum: You got three months. Pick a date to get married or I'm gone. He did. We did.

Almost instantly we embarked on a 50-year relationship—both personal and professional—combining our many skills and interests. In reality, we were like oil and water but somehow it worked. I chose not to change my name when I married, which was unusual back then. When Gary asked why, I responded, "Oh, I'll gladly change my name to yours...if you change your name to mine." He stared at me with a combination of shock, amusement, and respect. He got it.

I'd like to think my experience at Bennington had a bit to do with that decision. And so many more in my life.

Gary, "Dr. Z," was an inventive "mad scientist," while I had the heart, mind, and soul of an artist. Together we formed our company, Zeller International Ltd., and embarked on a very unusual, multi-disciplined career which included: developing non-toxic chemistries; creating special effects for film and TV; Merce Cunningham; NYC carry permits; Frank Stella; federal, state and city explosives and pyrotechnical licenses; John Belushi; designing restaurants and products; David Blaine; the CIA; creating environmentally-friendly technologies for the military and general public; Jane Goodall; an Academy Award for Technical Achievement; Isamu Noguchi; and even accomplishing the iconic exploding head effect in the cult classic film *Scanners*. Check out the recent documentary. All kinds of crazy, wacky, fun stuff. Essentially, combinations of art and technology. Reflections of us, though he had the big ego and was the frontman.

Our products and contributions have been seen in thousands of films and productions including *Dawn of the Dead*, *Rambo*, *Back to the Future*, *Harry Potter*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Young Sherlock Holmes*, *SNL*, *Lone Survivor*, *Death Race*, *Game of Thrones*, *Cirque du Soleil*, and on and on.

Just in case our lives weren't schizophrenic enough, we chose to live primarily very isolated, off-the-grid, on top of a mountain in the Catskills, in a log cabin we built by hand. We simply wanted to run around naked in the woods, make moonshine, and set off fireworks. And we did.

After 20 tumultuous years together, we finally thought we were mature enough to have a child—to us, the most important decision in one's life. Our now 34-year-old son, Evan Zeller, has created an extraordinary life for himself in LA. He is a digital/wireless marketing specialist in the ad world, raced motorcycles when he was eight years old (still does), recently bought his first house, snowboards, travels worldwide, and is soon off to Mexico City and Cuba. Evan and his rescued shepherd/wolf dog, Amigo, will be the subjects of a *Cesar: 911* TV episode—though by now it has probably aired on National Geographic. He is pure joy in my life. We all went to our 25th Reunion and had a ball. He talks about it to this day. Dance class, poetry readings, art exhibits, gossip, but mostly his very detailed recollections were of the incredible selection of food! He was nine and has been a fan of the college ever since. (I'll never tell why.)

Somewhere in the middle of this, I managed to simultaneously co-host the ground-breaking WCBS-TV show for two years entitled *The Lives We Live*. It was the first time a TV show was produced with “real” women from different walks of life—unscripted, unedited, uncensored, live-on-tape. Actual airtime was 22 minutes and that is exactly what we filmed. Only one show did not make it on the air, but that is another story. The industry recognizes our pioneering show as the “inspiration” for *The View* and all those other female talk shows that followed.

My husband suddenly passed away almost two years ago and I am digging deep to move forward and create a new life.



Our vintage trailer.

The seeds of independence, adventure and exploration were planted during my time at Bennington and continue to thrive today. I didn't get rich (though that would have been really nice!), but—for the most part—I continue to have a helluva fascinating time.

I have started writing my autobiography entitled *119 Ave D: My Life Before and After*. The first line is an exact quote from a NYC undercover cop during the Serpico era: “If this ever happens again, shoot 'em, make sure they're dead, throw 'em out the back window, and we'll write it off as a drug murder.” THANK YOU Bennington College for all you continue to represent, inspire, and teach. Ya did real good!

## Amy Stern Stoffelmayr

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I know that I idealize my time at Bennington, but it was very wonderful. My life opened up on so many levels—intellectually, creatively, expressively, interpersonally. And strong areas of interest and pleasure have stayed with me over the succeeding years. I remember my art and literature classes most vividly: printmaking with Vincent Longo, drawing with a variety of teachers including Pat Adams, and English Renaissance poetry with Barbara Herrnstein Smith.

I also loved living in a largely female environment. It is precious to have had that experience at a critical life stage. I had so much fun at Bennington, on every level. I feel that I became myself there.

After college, I married my Austrian boyfriend and moved to Scotland for the next eight years, where my kids were born, Kaspar and Gudrun, now in their mid-forties. Although I came to appreciate Scotland tremendously, going through Bennington “withdrawal” was painful. Annie Able Hatcher Schlesinger (class of '65) lived in England for six of those years and our friendship was (and is) helpful in keeping the memories alive.

Since then, I've lived in Michigan, Wyoming, and now Boston. My work life was in Michigan. I originally worked as a social worker and then returned to school for “retooling” (as I thought of it, in the land of automobile manufacturing), and became a psychologist. I did clinical work in a variety of settings: public and private, academic and community, and am now happily retired. My husband died eight years ago; my children are independent and thriving. I am struck by the way that old age and some (thus far) mild infirmities have necessitated being highly internally-directed and motivated. Strengths developed at Bennington and who I became there helped me to do this.

## Shelagh Gordon Talbot

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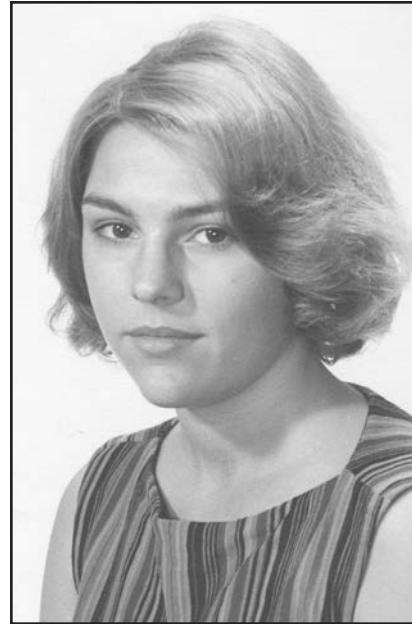
What an interesting ride this lifetime—remembering Bennington with such fondness: the campus in autumn crispness, the teachings—Mr. Galvagni springs to mind as do wonderful afternoons with Catherine Osgood Foster and the joy we all felt when Robert Frost came to campus.

From there, I went to Boston and worked at Channels 4 (WBZ-TV) and 5 (WCVB-TV). Did a children's show on Channel 4 with cowboy Rex Trailer, *Boomtown*. Then on to Channel 5 as production coordinator for *Jabberwocky*. It was a blast—five characters and a Muppet created by Jim Henson. His name was Dirty Frank and he lived in a cardboard box. We won an NATPE award for that one! If you were in Boston in the late '60s and early 1970s you mind remember these.

That morphed into decades of working in the art department in the movie industry. Films include *Rushmore*, *Arlington Road*, *American Gun*, *Glory Years* and *Dead Solid Perfect* (both HBO Specials), *The Big Green* (Walt Disney Productions), *Rescue 911*, and *Crime Story* (television series). There's an indescribable energy creating movies—people come together and work furiously and tirelessly for months and months. Bonds and friendships are made. Then the project is over and we go separate ways. Like a bizarre marriage/divorce that repeats itself. Wouldn't have missed those years for the world!

Also pursued a singing career, highlighted with a gig in Osaka, Japan. What a fascinating time to be there during the 1980s. Had a five-piece backup band and we mixed it up with jazz and rock 'n' roll. The songs most requested were "Feelings" and "Funny Valentine." Saw lots of the countryside. My favorite adventure was an invitation to lunch by an "Obahasan"—an elderly lady, the widow of a local priest. She lived in an ancient house—pegged together in the 1600s. We sat around her fire and she presented the most amazing shrimp teriyaki I have ever tasted.

*Shelagh Gordon Talbot.*



Then came marriage to a wonderful man, James Talbot. We lived in the Downeast section of Maine, on the rocky coast. We had a little girl, Jessica, and were in the process of building our cabin on a cove when Jim died running in a local road race—our daughter only four months old. So.... after being bonkers for a time, we dusted off and persevered.

Moved to Greenville, Maine, on the shores of Moosehead Lake and wrote human-interest stories for a community newspaper. Then helped to create a magazine called *Up North*, full-color and finely produced, celebrating life in the Northwoods of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. As editor, I relished doing layout and design, and delighted in the people and places I wrote about. Unfortunately the magazine went out-of-print much to the disappointment of about 25,000 readers. Became a freelance writer for other publications including *North Country*, *Bangor Daily News*, and others. I continue to love writing and am currently working on a children's book. And ... I play music often, alone or with friends—it's vital nourishment!



*Playing for the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Drive at Boston City Hall with Rex Trailer (Boomtown) in 1968.*

## Ellen Taussig

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Having grown up in a 10th floor, cramped apartment in Manhattan, the green sweep of Commons lawn and New England quaintness of my dorm room seemed heavenly to me. The campus promised peace and potential. But at the age of 16 and still quite naïve, I also felt somewhat intimidated by what seemed to me an exclusive setting. I knew a few people from my high school, and some other New Yorkers, but the college community was my first exposure to a more WASPy population.

Bennington was the only college I wanted to attend (having been given some geographic restrictions by my parents) because alumnae I had met from there were my role models. They were strong, brilliant, and independent women—feminists before their time. Although I had no idea how I wanted to move forward in 1966, my life has unfolded in wonderful ways that can be traced to roots at Bennington.

I majored in literature, and also continued a very intense involvement in music. I chose to give a piano recital, which I knew would be the first and last one I would ever give. I never had ambitions to be a professional pianist, but as I had hoped when I applied, I was able to devote significant time to music while majoring in literature. My daily routine of walking to Jennings to practice in a room that felt like being on top of the world anchored my day. Recently, my dear friend Celia Hudson Chandler '67 surprised me with a CD of my recital in June 1966, which I had never heard, made possible through today's library services (!). She returned a part of myself to me, as I sounded a lot better than I ever remembered. Today music continues to be a gift in my life, and in spite of a little arthritis, I still play the piano.

Language and literature with Ben Belitt was my introduction to in-depth literary analysis. Although somewhat anxious that my public school background would be inadequate preparation, I was thrilled that my first "paper," a memoir exercise to accompany James Joyce's *Portrait*, received praise. What a great first assignment for a new college freshman—a personal transition piece linking the past to this new phase of life. My true intellectual turning point came as a sophomore in Barbara Herrnstein Smith's Milton, Pope, and Keats class. Many of us were in awe if not intimidated by her extraordinary mind and knowledge. What a brilliant idea for a course—learning about three centuries through significant poets. Of course, we couldn't crack *Paradise Lost* without understanding meter in poetry. Barbara's teaching strategy, and one that I have used often since, was to have us write crazy examples of meter, e.g. trochaic dimeter, and finally a heroic simile, of which there are many in Milton. I remember dashing these off very quickly so that I could head down to NYC to see my boyfriend. In class on Monday she reported her disappointment that only two people had done the assignment correctly. I was one of them. I now felt I had a



little bit of legitimacy with her. There is no better way to develop understanding and appreciation for greatness in any endeavor than trying to do it yourself. However, I was convinced I would be kicked out of the college for the inadequacy of my major paper on *Paradise Lost*. Instead, Barbara returned it with high praise, using the phrase, "approaches a simple eloquence." I couldn't believe it. I eventually wrote my thesis with Barbara, and thesis tutorial sessions became a model for me for how to teach writing to my own students.

Stanley Edgar Hyman's famed Myth, Ritual, and Literature also became a model for me of integrated education. At the school which I co-founded in Seattle, The Northwest School ([www.northwestschool.org](http://www.northwestschool.org)), we teach a fully integrated, chronological sequence of the history of civilization in grades 9–11, including English and history and other aspects of society as well, with readings about or from the period. Every student also has regular writing conferences, modeled after my thesis tutorials.

In June 1966, all I knew about my future was that I did not want to continue in academic English and that I wanted adventure in Europe. I got a grant to teach English in Germany, where I also continued studying music. After two years, still unsure of my future, I joined my boyfriend, soon to become fiancé, in New Haven and fell into teaching in a "poverty program." I taught inner city kids piano for \$6.00 an hour, not bad for the day. I discovered I was good at it and liked it. My fiancé was finishing at the Yale School of Music and I was accepted into the Yale Master of Arts in Teaching. I had resisted teaching as a career up till then—a leftover attitude from an earlier era that believed that you only went into teaching when you had nothing else to do—but now entered the profession with passion. To bring things full circle, I just learned that three Ethiopian students, who I recruited in 2013 to be in the first class of a school I helped found in Addis Ababa, will be in a Global Scholars program this summer at Yale!

My first husband was recruited to be a founding faculty member of the California Institute of the Arts, and in 1970 we happily headed across country to the promised land of sunny California. (My first trip west of New Jersey was to Aspen for the music festival in 1967, with three fellow Bennington students in a VW Bug!) In Los Angeles, I started teaching in a private school, met my second husband, the father of my wonderful daughter, and we moved to Seattle where I have been since 1976. Finding an appalling education scene here, my husband and another colleague and I—shameless educational idealists—decided we had little to lose and we had to start a school or get out of the business. We simply could not NOT start a school. Today, in our 35th year, The Northwest School is a distinguished college preparatory school with 510 students in grades 6–12, which accepts one out of six applicants. We have had alumni at Bennington since our start and some Bennington alumni children have attended NWS. A progressive institution, we have maintained our founding ideals of hiring only the best teachers who have passion about their subject, educating with equal strength in all academic and artistic areas, requiring two arts classes taught by professionals, hands-on care for the environment, discovery-based integrated curriculum, a significant global program with partner schools in China, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Spain, and Taiwan, and the only dormitory in Seattle. I was Head of School for 20 years. We also cultivate a strong sense of community. Any Benningtonian would feel comfortable at The Northwest School. Our alumni have distinguished themselves in many professions, including one of Silicon Valley's before-30 billionaires.

I don't believe in the "r" word, as in retired, but I left NWS five years ago and was recruited to help found the school in Ethiopia, International Leadership Academy of Ethiopia/ILAE ([www.ilacademy.org](http://www.ilacademy.org)). These are some of the best years of my life, as I am only doing the work I want to do when and with whom I want to do it.

My daughter has just received her principal's license in New York, after a 13-year teaching career, but hopes to start an urban public school in Seattle. I also just became a grandmother, the greatest joy of all!

## Jane Wechsler

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When I arrived at Bennington my primary interests were literature and art history—more specifically, art criticism. I thought I wanted to be an art critic. I have always been, and continue to be, an avid reader. My interest in literature has never waned, ever since my brother let me read his Hardy Boys book when I was seven. I've been going strong ever since. But I dropped my desire to be an art critic pretty quickly, while remaining interested in art. I am not an artist, but I continue to love art, museums, creative expression wherever I see it.

I was not at all aware how much Bennington actually did influence me. It took a while for it to dawn on me. As my husband of 36 years says, "Jane, you're not a single trial learner." Nonetheless, most of my adult life has been involved in education. I founded a Montessori school in 1981 and retired in 2012. The school currently has two campuses, one for the preschool children, and the other for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. I taught for almost all the years I ran the school, primarily in the elementary programs. I also trained Montessori teachers. Montessori is an ungraded system, with a three-year age span in all programs, so kids of all ages are friends. Children learn through doing, and all of their lessons are hands on. There are no grades. All teaching/learning is individualized. There is no difference between art and math. As Maria Montessori said, "Everything the child does is creative." Somehow my time at Bennington and the Bennington environment and philosophy seemed to resonate with my love of Montessori. When I hired art or music teachers,

they were always working and performing in their respective fields. That I took directly from Bennington. There are no mistakes, only learning experiences. I think that's a good Bennington precept as well. All children/students were treated with respect. Whether four or 14, whatever they had to contribute was important. Listening to children is my most important skill.

The years after I left Bennington were tumultuous. I eloped with a racecar driver when I was about 21. Naturally, that didn't last. Then I moved to LA, then back to NYC. In New York I had three different teaching jobs: one with Head Start, where Shirley Chisholm was my boss; another with



*Here we are in Homer, Alaska.*

Head Start in Hell's Kitchen; and the last at a Quaker school in Brooklyn Heights. I loved them all with a passion. Each job confirmed my love of children and moved me along the path that would become my life's work. Both Bennington and the Quakers were major influences on me. During my last move to LA, around 1972, I became seriously interested in meditation, a practice that has lasted to this day, and has changed my life.

My first son, Gabriel, was born in LA in 1975. When he was one we moved to Berkeley. In 1980 I met my current husband, Bruce. Our son, Luke, was born in 1983. My husband and I have lived on the same street in Berkeley since 1981 and raised our two sons until they left us—to go to college and have their lives. Our oldest, Gabriel, lives in London with his wife and our three granddaughters. We miss them every day we're not with them. Our younger son, Luke, lives near by, which is a good thing. That makes up a little for not having our entire, beloved family together. They have plans to move back to Berkeley, and we can't wait.

I try not to have regrets, but I do wish I'd had four years at Bennington. When I arrived there I thought I already knew a lot. But humility is a terrific teacher, and I quickly realized I knew nothing. So I had to go and find out what I needed for my life. My life could not have turned out better. I am so grateful for all the ups and downs that got me here today.

I guess I got exactly what I needed. Bennington remains a bright light for me. I've had Bennington students come to my school for winter internships, and they've been spectacular. People are miracles when they are allowed to become themselves. Bennington does that for people.



*Bruce and I in Grand Canyon. March 2016.*



*Here we all are in Key Biscayne.*



*Mae and I in London. Jan. 2016.*

## Elizabeth Bailey Richter Zimmer

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I almost didn't make it to Bennington. I wrote asking for a roommate who didn't smoke. A letter came suggesting that if I had trouble with cigarette smoke I'd better rethink attending. I showed up anyway, and contented myself with building small fires in classroom ashtrays while everyone else puffed away. It was awful.

I came seeking training in theater, but soon, fed up with being condescended to by teachers like Sy Syna, switched into literature and studied with Stanley Hyman, Francis Golfing, Kit Foster, and especially Howard Nemerov. A scholarship student, I did practically every campus job, from running the switchboard to "waiting on" to working the snack bar, where I developed a taste for pomegranates and peanut-butter-and-bacon sandwiches. I also babysat for Julia Herrnstein-Smith, pruned Christmas trees for George Holt, led campus tours, and edited people's term papers. In my senior year, tired of sitting, reading, and writing all the time, I signed up for the freshman dance quarter, which changed my life in unforeseen ways.

After graduation I headed for a fellowship at UC San Diego, where I lasted one semester before "flipping out" after an illegal abortion followed by too many pot brownies on the New Year's Eve when Reagan was inaugurated governor of California (anyone interested in the details of this debacle can visit [persimmontree.org](http://persimmontree.org), the website of a magazine I help edit; search for "North Wing" or my name; or email me).

I returned to graduate school at Stony Brook, where I acquired both an MA and an MRS. Wendy Erdman's band, Brain Damage, played at my wedding in 1969. My husband and I moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where I taught writing and contributed to local papers and the CBC. Hungry for adult dance classes, I worked to establish the Halifax Dance Co-op, still operating more than 40 years later; Rima Gitlin Faber was one of the teachers we imported.

After five years and no kids, I left the marriage and moved to Vancouver, where I continued writing about dance and taught at a community college. Then I spent 10 years back in New York, working in arts-in-education and freelancing for newspapers and magazines, before being hired as the dance critic at the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*. Thirteen months after I arrived in California, the paper folded; I spent three more years doing odd jobs in LA and San Francisco. When the dance editor of *The Village Voice* dropped dead in 1992, I got his job and returned to Manhattan. Fourteen years later, the *Voice's* new owners fired all us senior editors in one day.



I'm still editing books and journals, as well as writing about dancing, teaching in an MFA program for dancers at Hollins University (the so-called "Bennington of the South"), and working as a standardized patient—an acting job—at medical schools in New York. Having lived in 24 apartments in five cities since leaving Bennington, in 1996 I moved into a one-bedroom at Penn South, a middle-income co-op in Chelsea that enables me to afford the city despite my gig-economy life. I've survived a knee replacement and a ruptured Achilles tendon, take Feldenkrais and Pilates classes, walk everywhere, and love running into fellow Benningtonians. Poet Stanley Kunitz's line resounds in my head: "My sign: *Mobility*—and damn the cost!"



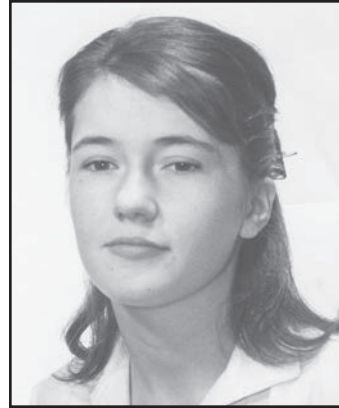
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Paul Fink Aaron



Anne Longstreth Anderson



Lauren Doolittle Ansaldo



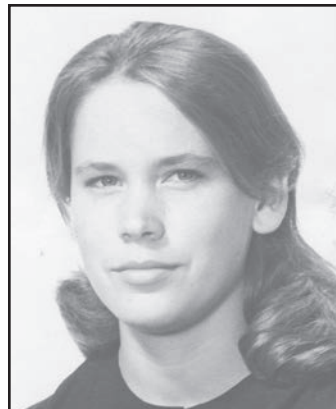
Jeanette Ball



Louise A. Baum



Nan Beer



Janis L. Birkeland



Sara Spadea Black



Patricia Tate Boutilier

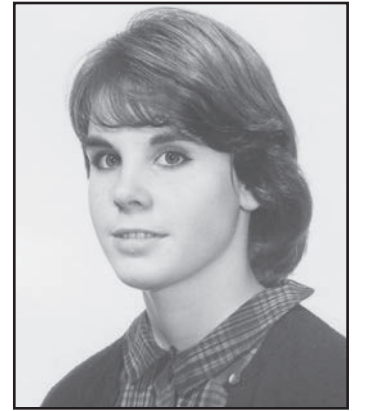
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Nancy Barrows Bowen



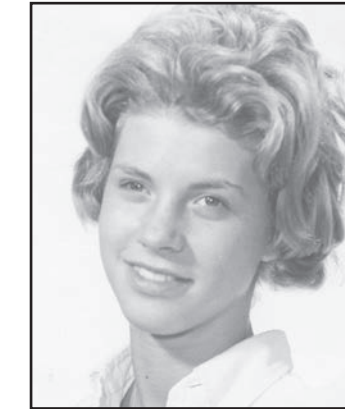
Victoria Brahe-Wiley



Mary Baker Carrithers



Susan Carroll



Lisa T. Clark



Kathy Kondell Conrad



Colleen Copelan



Valerie Crane



Cynthia Cole Curran

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Ellen Weintraub D'Acquisto



Anita Dancoff



Pamela Stowe Fisher



Susanne F. Thomsen Fones



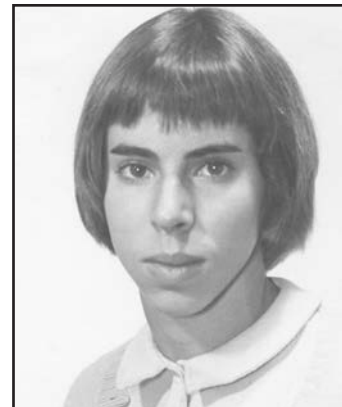
Clare Franco



Adrienne K. Franklin



Susan C. Frary



Johanna Freudenberg



Jane Fuller

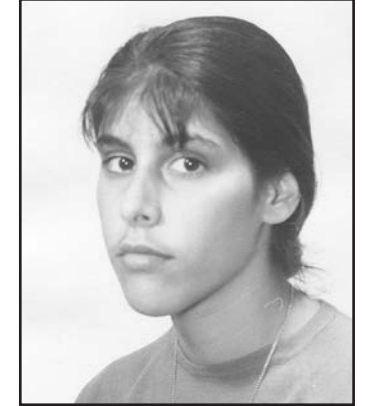
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Barbara S. Matthews Furstenberg



Katherine Garnett



Heidi Gluck



Trudy Goodman



Thomas Griffin



Diana Grilli



Anthony R. Gronner



Colette Whitney Gruenebaum



Lisa Lippold Hantman

**No update available**



Marian Johnson Henderson



Susan Wyman Jannicky



Maryann Johnson



Margaret Kallman



Margaret Kinder



Mica K. Knapp



Elin Fleischer Leonard



Marion Liebes



Susan Loesser

**No update available**



Eileen Thaler Lordahl



Marilyn N. Lowen



Sheila Wheeler Lutton



Anne MacNichol



Carey Maynard-Moody



Karen McAuley



Ruth B. Neustadter



Cynthia M. Leapley Nicely



Alice V. Helfferich Orsini

No update available



Shelley Miller Pearlman



Roberta L. Phillips



Martha Rockwell



Elizabeth Roeseler



Gilian R. Kneubuhl Roush



Glynn Rudich



Dorette G.Kagin Sarachik



Deborah Pollack Schanzer



Valerie Henkel Schmergel

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Susannah Schroll



Elisabeth S. Searles



Kathran Siegel



Beth Silverman



Susan Slovak



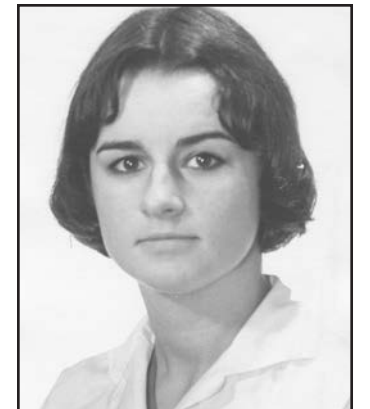
Susan Volwiler Smyth



Susan Stowens



Roberta A. Jossy Tichenor



Sharon E. Sperl Turner

**No update available**



Heidi J. von Bergen



Anne L. Waldman



Novelene Yatsko Walters



Ethel Jacoff Weinberger



Ellen D. Wilbur

**No update or photo available**

Livia Jackson

Charles Perniconi

Nancy Miller Katzoff

Mariana Brinser Sonntag

Abigail Mellen

Allan Stevens

**We remember**



Barbara Anixter



Frances Boyer



Roberta Ballin Fischer



Debra K. Fisher



Lee C. Fowler



Barbara K. Reedman Gambier



Constance V. Wallace Gordon



Sophia Hammond-Vachss



Margaret Hauschka

**We remember**



Susan Thompson Massey



Nancy D. Osthues



Susanne Snyder Rappaport



Shelley Abrahamson Richtmyer



Ruth Felsher Schreiber



Martha Golstein White



Judith Schwartz Yeargin

**We remember - no photo available**

Marie Schomaker





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